A STUDY OF HISTORY, MYTHS, LEGENDS AND ORAL TRADITION IN THE PLAYS OF GIRISH KARNAD

THESIS SUBMITTED
TO **KANNADA UNIVERSITY, HAMPI**
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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DECLARATION

The thesis entitled ***A Study of History, Myths, Legends and Oral Traditions in the plays of Girish Karnad*** has been prepared for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy under the guidance of **Dr. H. Madhava Bhat**, Professor and Head, Department of English, Vivekananda College, Puttur.

I certify that this work has not previously been published or submitted for any degree or diploma in any university.

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This is to certify that this thesis entitled ***A Study of History Myths, Legends and Oral Traditions in the Plays Girish Karnad*** submitted by **Mr. Shankaranarayana. K.** for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy represents his original work and has not been previously been submitted for any degree or diploma in any university.

The work has been carried out by him under my guidance and supervision at the Department of Bhaasha Nikaya, Dr. HaMaNa Research Centre, S.D.M College(Autonomous) Ujire, affiliated to Kannada University, Hampi.

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Abbreviations used in the thesis

1	*Tu*	*Tughlaq*
2	*TD*	*Tale-Danda*
3	*DTS*	*The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*
4	*Ya*	*Yayati*
5	*MN*	*MaNishada*
6	*BS*	*Bali: The Sacrifice.*
7	*FR*	*The Fire and The Rain*
8	*Ha*	*Hayavadana*
9	*NM*	*Naga-Mandala*
10	*Fl*	*Flowers*
11	*AM*	*Anju Mallige*
12	*BI*	*Broken Images*
13	*WA*	*Wedding Album*

Chapter- One

Introduction

Chapter-One

Introduction

Literature and Tradition

Serious literature interprets the complexity of human life and offers its readers diverse thoughts, alternative perceptions, and understanding to view life. The writers with their deep perceptions and scientific enquiry respond to the ups and downs of human life in various ways. The writers use either the ancient narratives or the various literary devices while giving artistic shapes to the subjects that they are dealing with. Generally the individual creativity of a writer is admired and interpreted in various ways. It is in this process the reader may tend to observe only the writer's difference from other writers and admire his works. The critical appreciation of this sort may not take into account the writer's relation with the past and the rich literary tradition in his works. Suppose a reader approaches literature without such prejudice, he may find himself in a rich literary world that includes not only the best of the writer but also the best of the past literatures as T.S Eliot writes in his essay 'Tradition and Individual Talent':

> One of the facts that might come to light in the process is our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else. In those aspects or parts of his work we pretend to find what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of the man. We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors; we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Where as, if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors assert, their immortality most vigorously.[1]

Literature is a part of the rich human tradition. Literature, music, art, dance, folklore, rituals and practices are different aspects of the human cultural tradition. Literary tradition includes literary works, myths, history, inscriptions, manuscripts, legends and folklore. Literary works embody everything related to human life and therefore they offer a wide spectrum for various kinds of studies.

The study of history, myths, legends and folk has attracted serious attention of the scholars belonging to various disciplines. Like the writers, the psychologists, the anthropologists, the sociologists, and other social scientists have dealt with these subjects elaborately in their pursuit of knowledge. Although the ultimate interest of all the disciplines is human life, the approaches vary from discipline to discipline. For example a scientist may approach a flower with a scientific enquiry as Hudson explains, 'The botanist may dissect the 'flower in the crannied wall', and, with its tiny members laid out before him, may discourse to us of its bracts and petals, its stamens and pistils.'[2] But for a poet the flower may be the 'lady' of the garden or a 'light' of the heart. In spite of the differences in their approaches their ultimate purpose is to explore the hidden knowledge. The truths that they discover are complementary and not contrasting. The interpretations of scientists appear as wonderful and profound as the interpretations of the writers.

It is believed that a writer's concern is to interpret the reality concerning human life. It is in the process of articulation of thoughts, feelings, and observations, the writers explore the hidden truths through the medium of literary genres such as drama, poetry, fiction, and biographies. Ever since man learnt to use literary devices to articulate his life experience and observations, literary, mythical, legendary, historical, and folk allusions have become a common feature in literature. So, there is a close affinity between present literatures and earlier literatures, literatures and myths, literatures and history, literatures and legend and literatures and folk. In this respect it is not a contentious issue at all to debate that literature is separate from other systems of expressions. An attempt has been

made here under to analyze the affinity between literatures and other disciplines such as myth, history and folk.

Literature and Myth

'Myth' generally means anything that is opposite to 'reality'. For the Greeks 'myths' meant 'fable', 'tale', 'talk', 'speech'. But later the word came to denote that 'what cannot really exist' is myth. The literal meaning is not sufficient to understand the full ramifications of it. The allegorical dimensions of myths are being explored by writers, critics, philosophers, psychologists through their studies. The study made by them not only reveals the archaic societies in which myths really lived predominantly as a true, precious and sacred story but also suggests the kind of changes to be made in the life of a modern man for a better and refined life. Bronislaw Malinowski's words reflect broadly the myth and its functions:

> Studied alive, myth…is not an explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest, but a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions, even practical requirements. Myth fulfills in primitive culture an indispensable function, it expresses, enhances and codifies belief, it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man. Myth is thus a vital ingredient of human civilization; it is not an idle, but a hard worked active force; it is not an intellectual explanation or an artistic imagery, but a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom….These stories are to the natives a statement of primeval, greater, and more relevant reality, by which the present life, facts and activities of mankind are determined, the knowledge of which supplies man with the motive for ritual and moral actions, as well as with indications as to how to perform them.[3]

Myth is an extremely complex cultural reality, and it can be studied from various complementary viewpoints. 'Myth tells how, through the deeds of supernatural beings, a reality came into existence, be it the whole of reality, an island, a species of plant, a particular kind of human behaviour, an institution.'[4] Myth is always an account of creation by the supernatural beings. Myth has always had a very significant position in human psychology and society from its beginning to make men understand life. ***The Webster's New Twentieth century Dictionary*** of the English Language (1979) explains myth as 'a traditional story of unknown authorship, ostensible with a historical basis, but serving, usually to explain some phenomena of nature, the origin of man, or the customs, institution, religious rites etc, of a people. Myths usually involve the exploits of gods and heroes.' As myth is a memory of the past told in a fictitious way, it is history told as story not a story told as history. In other words, it is a narrative of a real experience in the past. So what is called myth today is not an imaginary tale, but a real life experience of the primordial society. Northrop Fry elaborates it further referring to another aspect of myth:

> By a myth…I mean primarily a certain type of story. It is a story in which some of the chief characters are gods or other beings larger in power than humanity. Very seldom it is located in history; its action takes place in a world above or prior to ordinary time in *illotemore*, in Mircea Ediade's phrase. Hence, like the folktale, it is an abstract story pattern. The characters can do what they like, which means what the story teller likes. There is no need to be plausible nor logical in motivation. The things that happen in myth are things that happen only in stories; they are in a self-contained literary world.[5]

According to Fry myth is associated with the story of gods, or 'other beings larger in power' and 'prior to ordinary times.'

Most scholars agree that in ancient societies there was a relation between myth and ritual practice. Myths used to clarify the prescribed action of rites and rites used to enact the myth in the dramatic form. Though myth is not fantasy, nor poetry, nor philosophy nor psychology, it is associated with them in its ramifications, developments and degenerations. Based on the religious and literary functions of myth, it can be classified into 'true myths' and 'literary myths.' True myths are sacred narratives that concern religions where as literary myths are the narratives about gods and heroes. The terms such as 'myth' and 'legend' are often confused. Generally these terms are used alternatively. But in fact myths deal with supernatural beings and those great people who have reached the stature of gods while legends deal with extraordinary people. Myths and legends are two kinds of folklore. Gods and Gandharvas like Brahma, Shiva, Rama, Bharatha, Indra, Krishna, Ekalavya, Bhima and other great personalities like Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Meera, Rani Abbakka, Krishnadevaraya are not just individuals, they are archetypal characters and symbols of certain great virtues. The belief that they are extraordinary individuals makes them mythical. In this respect, the great men are mythified. The mythic personalities are always more powerful than the historical or biological ones. The historical personalities remain in the conscious state of mind while the mythical in the sub-conscious state. The great people with their historical and mythical personalities appear both mythical and historical. The supernatural beings are known for what they did and their sacred works. The sacred deeds have found a breakthrough into this world to establish a world of peace and order. The scholars, thinkers, artists study myths to understand the human life and society. It is believed that in literature, the mythical allusions serve as modes to deepen the perceptions or to revise the perceptions of the past. Therefore, myth in literature need not always idealize the past or depict the supernatural and great people as role models. Instead, it may be tools or metaphors to modify and refine the understanding about life.

Mythical stories are fossils of the cultural past. These stories deal with the origin of this universe, life cycles-birth, death and rebirth, and the deep rooted traditional beliefs and practices. The memories of the community life in the earliest days of the universe are transformed into mythical stories. The archetypal social values, beliefs, and societal norms are reflected in the mythical stories. These mythical narratives are not only transferred from generation to generation but also become an inseparable part of human life. As these narratives offer a broad canvas, in recent times, the study of them with perspectives such as historical, sociological, psychological, religious, critical and literary get more serious attention.

From ancient times the writers of every country have been gathering the potential for the artistic creations from the mythical sources due to their universality and the inclusiveness of the experience of all times and countries. There is one advantage to those writers who draw sources from the mythical narratives. The plot structures and episodes of the myths are preordained and the readers are familiar with them and therefore the writers' task is reduced to a considerable extent. Myth has been a great influence in the world literature. It is a historical fact that drama in its early stages of development depended upon myths as the myths provided stories having complex plots and characters. Indian English drama that flourished during the last hundred years has dealt with the religious beliefs and convictions, philosophical subjects, political and social issues, psychological matters through myths, historical events, and folk traditions. The playwrights like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, T.P. Kailasam, Girish Karnad, Badal Sircar, Uma Parameshwaran have made frequent use of Indian as well as foreign myths in their plays. The epics like ***Ramayana*** and ***Mahabharata*** are the chief sources of myths upon which the Indian playwrights draw time and again. This sort of allegiances to myths is true in the case of Kannada playwrights also.

The dramatists who have used various myths skillfully in their plays are able to reveal something new to the spectators and readers. The mythical allusions serve as 'metaphorical strategy' (Kuvempu calls it Prathima Vidhana) [6] to convey the message of the dramatist. In the modern times the people are unable to get the original mythical story structures in the narratives available to them. The narratives available are transformed narratives in various languages of the people. Due to such transformations either in the oral or written form the original elements of the myths are lost. Yet, mythical structures remain in the writings. The mythical plays deal with the role of supernatural elements in human life. Although the mythical plays deal with the intervention of supernatural in the life of common man, the popular dramas (Bayalatas), company theatre dramas and the modern mythical plays do not use myths in the same way. The popular dramas (mythical folk plays) enact the episodes from myths as a part of ritual. The company theatre dramas focus on religion and morality. But the modern mythical plays seriously discuss the religious background, social beliefs and practices and human relationships that are projected in myths as they are the products of the age of modern sensibilities such as rationality, materialism, existentialism.

The affinity between the popular ritual dramas ('Bayalatas') and religious worships was developed due to the man's allegiance to religion. But gradually as the religious allegiance lost its intensity, the company theatre dramas alienated a bit from their affinity to religion and focused on aesthetics. Thus, there is a historical development of the genre of drama from the earliest days to modern times in terms of plot constructions, characterizations, dialogue formations etc. Today a dramatist when he uses myths in his plays, perhaps uses it as just a symbol or a tool to discuss the modern man and his life.

It is evident that the company theatre dramas dramatize the myths as they appear, instead of analyzing them. Through the dramaturgy such as music, characterization,

scenes and actions, the dramatists easily adopt the mythical narratives into dramas to teach morals. The support and encouragement of the spectators to the company theatre gave way to a number of drama productions. Unlike the company dramas, the popular or folk dramas ('Bayalatas') are a part of rituals and therefore they got significance for their performance and not for their themes. The popular dramas serve as rituals where as company dramas propound moral values. The company theatre dramatists with more specificity and certainty sketch characters and construct plots. The productions of company theatres have more scope for entertainment. They involve the drama troupe comprising actors, musicians, directors, managers and use theatre props for conveying messages to the spectators. Therefore, the sole purpose of these dramas is to convey some message to the people through entertainment.

The history of the theatres in all the countries of the world reveals that in the early stages, the dramas used to depict mythical subjects and moral values that governed life and later the focus of attention was shifted to contemporary social subjects. This is true in the case of Kannada theatre also. The Kannada folk theatre was confined to the world of myths. The major Kannada dramatists in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century followed the Sanskrit drama tradition and used mythical narratives. The Sanskrit epics such as ***Ramayana*** and ***Mahabharata*** were the sources for these plays. Mythical stories, small episodes and characters from ***Ramayana*** and ***Mahabharata*** dominated these plays. The company theatre dramas used ***Mahabharata*** sources more than ***Ramayana***. The Kurukshethra war in ***Mahabharata*** having plenty of stories and sub stories is seen as a conflict between good and bad. This Kurukshethra war was used by many writers for the episodes and situations in their writings. The dramatists such as Bellave Narahari Shasthri, B. Puttaswamayya, and Nanjanagudu Sri Kantha Shasthri used the myths extensively for teaching morals. Like these dramatists, the Sanskrit dramatists employed the mythical narratives in their plays. But the difference between these playwrights is that

they belong to two different ages. The myth in the Sanskrit plays did reflect the deep rooted social practices whereas in the plays of nineteenth and twentieth centuries the myth was used solely to re-establish the values and practices that were lost due to the onslaught of alien culture. Yet, the moral 'bad is punished and good is protected' did remain as the plots of the company theatre dramas. Karnad, for his mythical plays such as ***Ma Nishada***, ***Yayati***, ***The Fire and The Rain***, **and** ***Bali: The Sacrifice*** has drawn the subjects from the myths, may be, to discuss the contemporary social and political problems. An attempt has been made to understand whether Karnad differs from the earlier dramatists in the treatment of myths and his concerns in his plays in the subsequent chapters of the thesis.

Literature and History

Besides the mythical narratives and the popular legendary folk stories, the historical narratives have also been the sources of literature and especially of plays. The social reformers, saints, religious leaders, Kings and Queens, political leaders of the past have become the subjects of plays. Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Kabirdasa, Damojipantha, Basavanna, Akkamahadevi, Gouthama Budda, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa, Hemareddy Mallamma, Krishnadevaraya, Tughlaq, Tipu are great historical personalities and upon these historical subjects many plays have been written. It is true that in the early phase of Indian English drama and Kannada drama, the historical narratives did not figure much as the mythical narratives. The historical plays have been written only in recent times. In the Indian English dramas, dramatists such as Girish Karnad, Gurucharan Das, and Asif Currimbhoy have used historical narratives in their plays. The modern Kannada dramatists like Samsa, Masti Venkatesh Iyengar, and Girish Karnad have drawn their sources from Indian history.

The historical narratives did not figure predominantly in the early phase of Indian Kannada or English dramas due to the lack of documents related to history. The historical

documents were not available as the myths may be because of the lack of historical awareness among the Indians. There was no direct participation of the common people in the ancient political history and as a result of this they do not have the memory of long history of the nation. Perhaps another reason for such a state is that the people had unstinted devotion to religion and myths than to history. And this devotion has in fact mythified some of the historical characters and the plays that enact such subjects are considered mythical plays rather than historical plays.

The idea of a nation and nationalism is of recent origin in India as Indians had only religious tradition and not the political history. Before the invasions of Muslims and the British, India was divided into small states in which Kings were the rulers. These states had seen golden ages at different times of history. The common people were confined to their small states and there was no opportunity for them to see a big nation. Instead of love for their language and nation, they had devotion to their Kings. Moreover the invasion of the aliens prevented them from developing Nationalism. It is this allegiance to religion rather than to the nation that led the mythical narratives to get a predominant position in literature.

There is danger to those who use historical narratives in their writings. The objectivity in interpretation and criticism of history may not appeal to everybody. In order to avoid such dangers, the writers may not go to the extent of exploring the truths or sometimes they may find themselves comfortable and secured if they draw upon mythical sources. The writers may become the targets of attack of the people when the subjects in their plays hurt and enrage them. That's why the number of historical plays is always meagre compared to mythical plays. A historical play that uses a recent historical event may invite more intense opposition from the fundamentalists.

Interestingly, like the dramatists of mythical plays, the dramatists of historical plays too have some benefits. The writers can easily convey a moral or a message by

using the available historical plot and characters. The readers may consider the myths or contemporary subjects in the texts as imaginative and the impact would be less where as if it is a historical event, they are bound to accept it as real and its effect would be more. Compared to the mythical plays, the historical plays with their historical characters would be more successful in the reinterpretation of the past history and proposition of ancient human values. The dramatists therefore are able to convey the message through the historical subjects more interestingly and in lively manner. Thus the playwrights' challenges to select subjects focusing on the contemporary issues have been eased by these sources.

Literature and history are not two opposite systems of documents. They are related to each other and their affinity is very ancient. Historical literature can be a historical document as it gives detailed description of the past events. Historical narratives can be good sources for literature. Based on the historical narratives lots of literary works in all languages in the form of dramas, poetry, and fiction have been produced. In this situation, the questions that arise before us are – How are literature and history related? To what extent a writer has to rely on the historical truth? Is the writer fully free to use any historical narrative? These questions do not have single uniform answer. However, literature and history are interdependent.

History is all that is remembered of the past as preserved in writing. It is the study of human past, with special reference to the written record. It is a kind of creation based on evidences and prerecorded theories. In other words, history is a record of the facts and figures of historical events based on the evidences such as inscriptions, monuments, pictures, and other objects. But in reality history includes much more concealed facts. These concealed facts pose challenges during the historical documentation. There is no scope for representation of ideas through imagination as the historical documentation method is always based on proofs and evidences. Literature explores the concealed facts.

In other words literature deals with the character and spirit of an age, not just the historical facts and figures. It is here the writers use the historical narratives to discuss and interpret the past for a better understanding. Historical narratives provide just structures. The writers, with their imagination give a poetic, dramatic or fictitious shape to them. Therefore in the historical literatures naturally there is scope for imagination and perceptions. The contemporary realities may appear in the historical situations. And in such literatures, historical narratives get secondary prominence. The contemporary historical plays explore the contemporary life, its beliefs and practices through the historical contexts. Therefore, the recent plays include just the message of the age from history to explore further meanings through the contemporary perspectives.

History is generally about the rulers. There is more importance to politics. The documents available at the courts and palaces are approved and recognized by the rulers. These documents are prepared by the historians who are appointed by the kings. Therefore it is believed that the documents that are available are the true history. But this is not true as there are many more things beyond the documents. There are plenty of examples for such documents that are deliberately created to glorify the deeds of the rulers. And most of the inscriptions have been written by the rulers. But, there are no such documents or evidences about the great cultural and social movements that changed the life of common people. The life of people belonging to poor sections of the society is not described in history. In this scenario, the writers attempt to focus on what is not available in history through their works. So the historical writings with their suggestive meanings draw the attention of the readers towards those hidden aspects of life. Karnad in his historical plays such as ***Tughlaq***, ***Tale-Danda***, and ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*** discusses history to explore the different dimensions, for reviewing and revising the readers' perception of the past as well as present. The detailed discussion of all the plays has been undertaken in the second chapter of the thesis.

Literature and Oral Traditions

Basically any cultural art forms when they are produced there is the religious spirit behind them. In other words, it is believed that religion is the root cause for the birth of art, literature, architecture, music, and dance. But, in the development of these art forms, they are changed into mediums of entertainment. The folk theatre was basically a part of the rituals. There is a difference between ritual and performance. The folk dramas such as Yakshagana, Doddata, and Sannata are basically religious art forms. Although, there are drama elements in them, they are performed as a part of religious ritual. Therefore, there is little scope for the development of the plot, characters and dialogues as in dramas. The religious rituals, festivals and dances occupy predominant place in folk dramas. Prior to the discussion on the folk dramas, it is essential to understand what folklore is and how it is related to drama and literature.

The folklore is understood as a cultural treasure house of traditional knowledge and beliefs. From ancient times, it has been transmitted by word of mouth (orally) through both prose and verse narratives. It was produced in all the countries even before man became literate. The unlettered people produced them like the lettered men produced literature such as poems, myths, dramas, proverbs, rituals etc. According to Encyclopedia Britannica until about 4000 BC all literature was oral because afterwards between 4000 and 3000 BC writing developed. Since then there has been written literature. But during all the centuries, in which the world has learnt to use writing, there has existed, side by side with the growing written literature, a large and significant activity carried by the unlettered in the form of folklore. This folk perhaps underwent changes over the years as it was passed from man to man orally. Each group of people has managed its folk in its own way. Therefore the folk that is available today may be in the improved or degenerated form. The most obvious characteristic of folk literature is its orality. Unlike the written literature, the oral tradition suffered not only changes but also loss because it

is concerned with speaking and singing. It entirely depends upon the existence of a living culture to perpetuate it. The speaker or singer is carrying on a tradition learned from other speakers and by delivering it to a living audience. If acceptable the story or the song is transferred to the next generations. Moreover, if the speakers are not skillful, the tradition may lose certain interesting elements or if the speakers are skillful, the tradition may be passed in the revitalized form. The folktales keep undergoing changes when they are transferred.

Literature and folk are mutually complementary and motivating sources in their growth. The folk in its oral voyage has offered itself as a big source to the written literature. The use of folk in literature is not of recent one. In the initial stages of writing, literature depended much on the folktales. The scholars' challenge would be to identify and ascertain the extent of their affinity and dependence in their growth. It is true that at different stages in different degrees these two disciplines grew mutually by receiving and giving. In the classical period, the neo classical period, medieval period, romantic period and the modern and post modern period there is the predominant presence of folk in written literature.

The modern dramas too have the folk elements in them. The dramatists such as Jadabharata, Girish Karnad, Lankesh, Chandrashekar Kambara and Shivaprakash have employed the dramaturgy of folk theatre extensively in their plays. The techniques of Epic theatre and Indian folk theatre are effectively used in Karnad's plays. The folk theatre elements such as prayer to Lord Ganesh, entry of Sutradara (actor-manager), songs, dances, goddess Kali's appearances, chorus, masks, and dolls are predominant in Karnad's play ***Hayavadana***. Karnad has given a beautiful shape to the folklore in his play and therefore ***Hayavadana*** is a unique example for its Indianness. In ***Naga-Mandala*** Karnad has used two Kannada folktales that he heard from AK Ramanujan. Similarly in his *Flowers* he has used the legend of Veeranna of Chitradurga region.[4] Karnad with his

new dramatic experiments in his plays demonstrates his humanistic concerns. Myths, history, and oral traditions have been profusely used in his plays. Perhaps, it was inevitable for him to search proper medium to convey the messages about the present realities. A detailed study of the folk plays has been undertaken in the fourth chapter to explore the concerns of Karnad

Girish Karnad and Theatre Tradition

The end of colonialism in India has created a great and powerful 'historical instance' of 'literary periodization' and 'Political chronology'. [7] The political autonomy has given way for a break from the colonial subjugation and starting of a new phase in literary productions. The fresh aesthetic orientations have led to new literary interpretations of the emergent literary works. The Indian theatre and drama of post-independence period, in spite of the colonial influence, has emerged as a significant literary tradition. The greatness of Indian drama lies in the linguistic plurality and, of course, this wide spectrum of Indian theatre practices pose difficulties to chronicle them and study. During the second half of the 20th century, the new forms of literary dramas and drama productions appeared on a large scale in various Indian regional languages. The origins of this evolving Indian drama tradition is in those plays that emerged under the British influence. However, to a great extent the dramatists, for a cultural identity, rejected colonial practices and sought the pre- colonial Indian tradition.

The thematic concern in Indian drama for the cultural identity began after independence with writers such as Dharmavir Bharati, Mohan Rakesh, Adya Rangacharya, and Girish Karnad. The dramatists during the first two decades after independence seem occupied significantly with creating and debating the relation of the new nation's present to its remote past through the narratives of myth, history, legend, and folk in relation to the theme, and the dramaturgical categories. The inadequacy and collapse of historical categories of theatre practices occupied the dramatists in searching

for proper modes of expression. The formation of the significant post-colonial dramatic genre is strategic to the dramatists during the post colonial period. The engagement with past narratives and dramatic practices continued and expanded over four decades into a multifaceted movement. The initial dramas such as ***Andhyug*** (literally means Blind Epoch, 1954) of Dharmavir Bharati, ***Ashad ka ek Din*** (literally means A Day in Early Autumn, Hindi, 1958) and ***Lahron Ke Raj Hans*** (literally means The Royal Swans On The Waves, 1963) of Mohan Rakesh, ***Kelu Janmejaya*** (literally means Listen Janmejaya, 1960) of Adya Rangacharya, *Yayati* (1960) ***MaNishada*** (1963) and ***Tughlaq*** (1964) of Girish Karnad draw sources from myths and history. In the second phase also, the plays such as ***Ghasiram Kotwal*** (1973) of Vijay Tendulkar, ***Hayavadana*** (1971) ***Bali: The Sacrifice*** (1980) ***Naga- Mandala*** (1988) ***Tale-Danda*** (1989) and ***Agni Mattu Male*** (1994) of Girish Karnad, ***Chanakya Vishnugupta*** (1988) of G.P Deshpande, use historical, mythic and folk narratives. The third phase is a collective practice comprising revivals, translations and transmutations of the Sanskrit plays of Bhasa, Kalidas, Shudraka, Vishakadatta and Mahendra Vikram Varman. Karnad's translations of his plays into English increased his readership across the world. All these plays either in the original or in the translated form circulated in multiple languages seem to place the classical Indian plays, playwrights, dramaturgy, mythic, epic and folk narratives in view before national and international audiences.

The greatest challenge that the dramatists have faced when colonialism ended is the theatre itself. Karnad writes about this contradictory situation:

> Indeed this (it was as if, at the time of conceiving the play, the playwright could imagine no stage on which to place it) contradiction haunts most contemporary play writing and theatre in India. Even to arrive at the heart of one's own mythology, the writer has to follow signposts planted by the

> west, a paradoxical situation for a culture in which the earliest extant play was written in A.D 200 [8]

Karnad thinks that the justification for this lies in the fact that the modern Indian theatre has been started by a group of people who adopted 'cultural amnesia' as a deliberate strategy. The urban theatre located in cities such as Bombay, Calcutta and Madras basically imitated the British Theatre. Karnad feels that none of these cities had an Indian past of its own, ' a history independent of the British'.[9]'These places had developed an Indian middle class that in all outward respects aspired to 'look' like its British counter part. The social value of this class was shaped by the English education it had received and by the need to work with the British in trade and administration.' [10]

The two western influences of the Indian theatre are – First, the separation of spectators from the stage by the proscenium. This is, in fact, to show what is being enacted on the stage is a spectacle free from rituals and therefore has no direct participation of the spectators in it. Second, drama is an entertainment commodity and therefore, its success depends on the monetary gains. The proscenium theatre and drama as a packaged commodity were new to the Indian drama tradition. Almost until nineteenth century, the audience had never known the practices of paying for a show and in fact they were a part of the drama performance. The Indian theatre survived for long under the patronage of Kings, ministers, local feudatories or temples. The mythic or historical or folk narratives familiar to the spectators are improvised in the performances and the success depended on the ability of the artists. The artists did not rehearse the play but used to improvise the plot like the musicians. Even today this practice is found in Yakshagana, a folk traditional art form.

The secular theatre that emerged under the British influence as Parsi theatre in Bombay became popular for the reason that the characters they portrayed are alienated from the true religious associations. The mythical or legendary or folk narratives were

shaped into tightly and intricately woven plots to capture the total attention of the spectators. The slow and gradual beginning and the participation of the audience in the characterization as in the folk plays never occurred in such plays. Therefore the Parsi theatre was allowed and accepted. Another important aspect is that there was a deliberate inner division in the theatre goers. In the public, the spectators were secular where as at home very traditional and loyal to caste, family and religion. The Parsi theatre for long had been popular for the spectacle it produced. But the arrival of films during the third decade of the 20th century diminished the significance of theatre all over the world as the film industry's entertainment packages are available at a cheaper rate. Although the Parsi theatre retained its importance by absorbing some of the features of traditional performing arts like music, mime, and comic interludes, in the middle of the century, the theatre practitioners and playwrights found no traditional form to continue with. However, as there was no other urban tradition, the playwrights like Karnad tried to use the Parsi model. But while exploring the life of Tughlaq, Karnad found even the stagecraft of the Parsi model inadequate. The limitation of the shallow and deep scenes is that the shallow scenes are played in the foreground of the stage with a painted curtain normally depicting a street. The characters belonging to the lower class with prominence are given to comedy act as a link in the development of the plot. This is primarily to engage the spectators while the deep scenes (inner stage) are set behind the curtain. In the shallow scenes only lower classes appear whereas in the deep scenes only important characters appear. Although these scenes are ideal to demarcate the rulers and the ruled, Karnad as he wrote ***Tughlaq*** couldn't maintain the balance as he was writing in a strange situation where the general public suddenly became important. The general elections entrusted the power in the hands of common people to select the leaders. This strong force that is the general public led the playwright to erase the margin between the shallow and deep scenes. The entry of a common man into the deep scene is a violation of the strictly observed spatial

hierarchy maintained by the Parsi theatre and a signal of a change that took place during the post- independence period.

There was another school of drama which took birth in 1930's at the height of India's freedom struggle. The playwrights and the artists realized their social obligation and found the need for social reform. The social reform was next to independence in their priority and this was not catered to by the Parsi theatre. Therefore, these playwrights focused on creating awareness about the social evils and the humiliation of Indians in the hands of the British. This social responsibility was taken up mostly by the amateur and non-professional groups. Unlike the financial logic of the Parsi theatre, the playwrights, artists, audience were governed by a genuine idealism. Their focus of attention was to educate the people and not just entertain as the Parsi theatre did. However, the stagecraft of this school followed the European model in spite of their commitment to art and society. The proscenium stage continued with 'Three walled room'. [11]

Karnad finds even this model insufficient in spite of their social themes as space in Indian tradition is arranged according to the caste hierarchy and hierarchy within the family. Karnad analyses this as follows:

> Space in a traditional home is ordered according to the caste hierarchy as well as the hierarchies within the family. Whether a person is permitted inside the compound, allowed as far as the outer veranda, or admitted into the living room depends on his or her caste and social status. And it is in the interior of the house, in the kitchen, in the room where gods are kept, or in the background, where family problems are talked, or allowed to fester, and where the women can have a say. The living room as the location of dramatic action made nonsense of the very social problem the playwrights set out to analyze, by distorting the caste dimensions as well as the position of women in the family.[12]

Karnad doesn't accept the young playwrights' European tools to analyze the social issues they are confronting. The problem of the theatre, according to Karnad, is: 'It may also be said that the refusal to go beyond the living room exactly mirrored the reluctance of these westernized, upper caste writers to go to the heart of the issues they were presenting.'[13] Neither the Parsi theatre nor the realistic theatre was adequate to Karnad and his generation of playwrights. Therefore, the challenge was from where he was to begin when the hundreds of years of urban theatre left him nothing to hang on. This situation led him to find the structures in the traditional forms that had been sidelined by the urban theatre. The contemporary playwrights in their search for traditional theatre structures obviously relied on Sanskrit Theatre. But in spite of a few Sanskrit productions such as ***Shakuntala*** and ***Mrichakatika***, the modern playwrights or theatre practitioners do not have any affinity with Sanskrit theatre as these plays assumed a specific social setting. The people in the well-ordered society have clearly defined roles and places. The Kings and Queens with the wealthy courtiers lived remote from the contemporary general public. So the divisions of people did exist in the plays.

However, the other popular drama forms in several regional languages that existed along with the Sanskrit theatre provided greater flexibility to the playwrights. The differences between the Sanskrit theatre and the popular forms such as folk are difficult to determine. Sanskrit is the language of scholars and philosophers whereas, the language of the common man is the natural language, used for day to day communication. The popular folk forms used this language. The regional languages became a better medium for artistic expression. But, Sanskrit and Sanskrit theatre unlike popular forms did not survive for long. The dignified and sophisticated theatre which emphasized mood rather than action failed to remain popular. Whereas, the popular forms that depicted battles, hard-won marriages, blood and thunder and other real incidents on stage retained the charm. Another significant deviation in the popular forms is that, unlike in Sanskrit where

plays were written, they entirely depended on improvisation of the story line. Although it is difficult to trace the growth, the existence of this popular art is seen in all languages. The Yakshagana Bayalata, the folk art of coastal Karnataka belongs to this category of folk art.

The Kannada Drama and Theatre

The Kannada drama tradition began in the recent times. After 1920's, influenced by amateur theatre the dramas appeared as written texts. Although *Mithravinda Govinda* and *Iaggappa Heggade Vivaha Prahasana* are historically the first Kannada plays, it was after Kailasam's *Tollugatti*, in the real sense, the Kannada drama tradition started. The study of the origin of the Kannada theatre and its influences on the contemporary Kannada drama seems to be relevant and necessary as it provides a clear direction and canvas for the study of the plays of Girish Karnad. The Kannada drama tradition instead of growing in line with the Indian classical or folk theatrical tradition rejected the tradition and prepared to grow on its own. The theoretical concerns of the dramatists against the popular theatre, in fact, slowed down the growth of the modern Kannada drama tradition. The differences between the popular theatre and classical drama tradition are not modern developments. The Sanskrit drama and folk drama too had the basic differences, although they were mutually benefited from each other's themes, stories, techniques etc. Balwant Gargi analyses the differences as

> Folk drama is unselfconscious, spontaneous and boisterously native. The classical theatre is rigid, complex and sophisticated. The folk is unhewn. The classical chiseled. The folk sprawls, the classical demands mathematical exactness, one is rural and, the other is regal. Folk theatre can make a whole community take part; the classical is for the chosen few. The folk has mass appeal and caters for the lowest common factor – the ordinary man; the classical is for the elite and demands previous

> knowledge from the spectators. The folk theatre has a universality – which the classical lacks. Folk art (singing, dancing, and acting) crosses the border of class, religion and country. The classical often imposes these barriers because of its esoteric nature. [14]

In spite of the differences between the folk and Sanskrit dramas, they have developed subtle relationships. Both have grown on 'give and take' policy. Folk theatre is more ancient compared to Sanskrit dramas. To Sanskrit dramas, the diverse rituals and the life style of the people in pre civilized age were the sources. But from the fourteenth century onwards, due to the regional languages, the classical language Sanskrit couldn't retain its importance. During this period the folk theatre became popular. But again like Sanskrit drama, the folk theatre adopted the mythical stories, the plot and the stories of Sanskrit plays.

In the modern age the popular theatre (Company theatre) and contemporary drama appear as two separate traditions. A brief analysis would reveal the impact and the development of these two traditions. The film industry has, of course, affected both popular and amateur theatres. The professional theatre or company theatre today seems to be lost and struggling. The theatre critic and director Prasanna explains the conditions of the drama companies in these words, 'Worried about their survival and earning bread these companies desperately included cabaret, and obscene jokes to attract people or exploited the weakness of the people to make money (the miracles based on the fear about the God and the superstitions are solely to make money).'[15]

Modern Kannada theatre has nearly two hundred years of history. Both contemporary drama writing and amateur theatre have the popular company theatre as their tradition. The first Kannada drama company was started in 1877 in north Karnataka (Gadag).But since then, the company dramas faced lot of challenges and were able to survive. The urban Parsi company dramas came to Karnataka and gave birth to this

Kannada company drama. The two influences on the Kannada company dramas are – first, the theatre of the Victorian age was introduced and second, the folk music, dance and the Yakshagana mode of productions were popularized. By adopting all these, the drama companies staged dramas carrying mythical episodes in various parts of the state. The drama companies staged not only mythical plays but also contemporary plays. The growth of the Kannada drama companies has contributed much to the development of the Kannada drama tradition. Theatre critic Prasanna observes five key areas – the idea of proscenium model of theatre is introduced for the first time, the inclusion of dialogues, perceiving the social concerns, and the use of dialects formed the acting, theatre music is introduced (while acting both dialogue and singing were introduced as a part of the stage production), it were a model for the constitution of a drama troupe and it popularized the dramas by staging them in villages.[16]

The drama companies although they played a pivotal role in retaining and perpetuating tradition, couldn't survive the test of time. In the course of time the drama companies failed in their total drama productions as they focused on theatre techniques only. The drama companies did not grow much probably because the theatre practitioners lacked the spirit of nationalism and it was hard to get the permission of the British rulers. The Kannada drama companies, unlike Parsi companies, did not reflect naturalism. Another drawback was that the Kannada drama companies did not have connections with the urban cities which the Parsi companies had. The Parsi companies developed because the new Indian thinkers who had direct contact with the British were in touch with them. Raja Ram Mohan Ray, Derozio and others had already opened the door for rationality and encouraged the professional artists. Therefore the theatre in Calcutta and Mumbai led to the growth of professional theatre. The rural and urban theatres grew along. Unlike the contemporary Kannada drama, the Marati drama did not reject the company dramas. As the Kannada drama companies did not have connections with cities and urban theatre, the

plays were staged in the district centers and villages where there were no theatres at all. That is why the Kannada drama companies survived for a short period only with the patronage of the villagers and not by the Kings or temples.

Another great challenge was that it had to run the big company and stage plays in different places by setting up the mobile theatre every time. True, this was the difficulty of the companies, but for the people, the stage, curtains, gas lamps and other theatrical props created an illusory world. Such a situation inevitably made the companies focus on creating an illusory world rather than on discussing the serious issues raised in the drama texts. Therefore the contemporary playwrights such as Kailasm and Sriranga rejected the technically sound drama companies. However, even in this situation, playwrights such as Girish Karnad, and G.B Joshi made use of the dramaturgy of company dramas. Therefore, a brief analysis of company drama seems appropriate. The performances, proscenium model and theatre props of the drama companies showed a proper direction to the contemporary Kannada playwrights. First, there was only folk theatre in the Kannada theatre tradition. Afterwards, the drama companies staged plays in the proscenium theatre that provided an atmosphere that was much required for writing plays. Therefore, the closed and controlled proscenium atmosphere resulted in the formation of dialogues. The Globe Theatre of Shakespeare and the traditional Sanskrit theatre were early theatres. The gap between the contemporary theatre tradition and ancient theatre was bridged by the drama companies. Therefore, the role of drama companies in the revival of drama tradition through their theatre models and change of scenes is unique. The change of scenes on the stage remained as a model for the contemporary drama tradition. The division of the stage for deep scenes, front scenes, and transfer scenes is based on the prominence of the characters and the importance of scenes. The deep scene is for the central characters and significant scenes and the front scene is for the comic characters and street scenes. This perception of the stage was not there in the folk or Sanskrit theatre

as they focused on the story line. Indian ancient theatre refused to have the fixed places on the stage for various scenes probably because it would obstruct the development of the plot. But for the contemporary drama writing, the dramaturgy and the use of the stage props were introduced by the drama companies.

For the contemporary playwrights, who have been influenced by the western theatre, the stage setting, the colourful curtains of drama companies did not appear useful and important because, by then, the western theatre had crossed the stage of curtains. Therefore for these playwrights the colourful curtains appeared dull and mean. Yet in the post-colonial age Girish Karnad employs the company theatre tradition in ***Tughlaq***. The court scenes appeared in the deep scene where as Azaam and Aziz scenes appeared in the street scenes. Karnad gradually in the play merges the division. The two different scenes become one. Aziz at the end of the play enters the palace and meets Tughlaq.

The contemporary dramatists in the first two decades after independence revitalized the Indian drama by turning to the traditional popular folk forms. Several of them did not have such affinity with the folk forms as they were born and brought up in cities. Interestingly, these dramatists did use the entire paraphernalia of theatre like half-curtains, masks, improvisation, music and mime. Karnad makes use of most of these techniques in his third play ***Hayavadana***.

Post-Colonial Drama and Theatre

The debate on the concepts such as 'indigenous' and 'alien', 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' continued even after Independence and the Indian playwrights tried to follow either western or indigenous models or both of them in their dramas almost till the end of 20th century. Based on the models the dramatists used, the playwrights are grouped into three sections. The first group rejects the legacy of colonial structure entirely and advocates the revival of pre-colonial traditions of performance, the second group rejects the indigenous structure and use the western structure and lastly the third group advocates

'the reinvigorated and syncretistic modernity, internationalism and cosmopolitan'[17] by adopting both the structures . The post-independence urban theatre in all aspects is 'a historically unprecedented formation' [18] because of the multiple engagements in theatre activities. The dramatic activity like authorship, canon formation, circulation of plays, production, reception, performer training, patronage in the post-colonial drama and theatre appears opposite to colonial drama. The state support sustained the dramatic activity at the national, regional and local level during this period. However, Indian theatre, compared to other modes of expression, is singular as it competes with other genres of literature, contemporary mass-cultural and popular media of film, television, and video that have a massive audience in urban and semi urban areas.

The appeals to the idealized past was a prominent element during the freedom movement in the mid-nineteenth century. But after independence, the phase of literary revision included the cultural past for it analyzed the expectations and the actual present. Thus the mythical, historical and folk plays of post-independence period represent the cultural past.

The cultural past provided the nationalist movement a strategic direction for a collective anti-colonial fight. As the economic and political interests of people became increasingly common like the development of their social and cultural life, the people of India were formed as a unity that led to the formation of a nation. Therefore the need of the past to unite people was inevitable and natural. But the people continued to be differentiated by language, ethnicity and culture even after India's freedom. And a similar challenge confronts the nation builders to justify the hard won freedom and evolve an independent India. The post-colonial plays evoke the cultural past to deal with the post-colonial politics of secular nation. The mythical, historical and folk plays written after Independence have been received in a diverse religious, social, political and economic. These plays are in fact about the historically grounded problem of the rigid and

irreducible cultural and religious differences and also the hierarchical divisions of the Hindu society. So the plays instead of asserting the unified identity of the present, scrutinize the dominant tradition in the context of pluralistic nation. This amounts to say that the playwrights enact the cultural past of a nation as a substantial subject of representation to revise the perceptions about the past for exploring the contemporary life.

In the Indian context, according to Aparna Dharwadkar the colonizer versus colonized, alien versus indigenous, positive versus negative, even colonial versus post-colonial relations are difficult to sustain because ever since the post-classical the discovery and the recovery of the Indian past have been more of collaborative enterprise between the European orientalist and Indian nationalist. The issues of colonial representations, nationalist reactions and post-colonial revisions, as Aparna Dharawadkar states can be discussed with the dialectic of 'heroic' and 'satiric' discourses. The heroic and satiric modes of representation are the strategies for, as Dharwadkar explains 'praising, and denigrating the historical traditions, religious and philosophical systems, social and political institutions and cultural and civic practices that constitute India as subject.' [19] Aparna Dharwadkar further states,

> The satiric mode employs irony, invective, and ridicule for the purpose of attack; the heroic mode adopts an idealistic, romantic, or sentimental stance for the purpose of celebration. The British modernists and the Indian reformists used ironic mode and European cultural relativists and Indian nationalists used heroic mode. The mutual praise or attack between the colonizer and the colonized during the colonial age was perennial. In post colonial times, the outsider withdraws from the direct political control of the colony and attacks or praises from a distance where as the insider increasingly shapes the historical and contemporary understanding of his culture with his heroic self-praise or satiric self -criticism. [20]

The cultural nationalists, during both colonial and post-colonial periods, in their works attempted to discover the ideal narratives in history, myth and folk to neutralize the cultural domination of the west. The lectures and essays of Swami Vivekananda, the commentary of Bala Gangadar Tilak on the Bhagavad-Gita, the historical plays of Jaishankar Prasad idealize the cultural past to neutralize the indignities of colonial subjugation. But in the post-colonial period, especially with Karnad, the interest in the cultural legacies has been more intense as the freedom gave greater opportunity to repossess their past. The parallel use of both 'heroic' mode and 'satiric' mode in the literary works after independence sustain the views of the past very similar to that of earlier cultural nationalists and Indian reformists. Therefore it is assumed that the satiric mode employed by the cultural nationalists in the post-colonial period makes fresh interpretations of the past in order to revise the self perceptions about the cultural past and thereby helps to see the contemporary life.

The Indian epics ***Mahabharata*** and ***Ramayana,*** being ancient works maintain a cultural presence in all modes of transmission. It is mostly absorbed in the dialectic of heroic and ironic modes of the nationalist's and anti nationalist's discourses. The intervention of the British started a new self-reflexive phase of cultural appropriation in which the epics are identified with cultural history and identity of India through modes of commentary, exposition, fictionalization and theatrical representation. Michael Medhasudan Dutt's ***Sarmista***', a drama in five acts(1859) Rabindranath Tagor's ***Chitra***, a play in one Act (1892), K.P. Khadilkar's ***Kichaka Vadh***(1907), Pandit Narayan Prasad Betab's ***Mahabharata*** (1913), Radhey Shyam Kathavachak's ***Draupadi Swayamvara*** (1935) are well known plays for their anti-colonial resistance by adopting the heroic mode. The epics have undergone radical transformation besides being popular engagement in the post-colonial period. The dramas of Dharmavir Bharati and Girish Karnad, perhaps, deviate from the heroic resistance and represent the problems of moral

indeterminacy, victimization, and the injustice in the epic. The washer-man in ***Ma Nishada***, Puru in ***Yayati,*** Arvasu in ***The Fire and The Rain*** and the mythical episodes in other plays register a revisionery literary phase. The literary dimension not only acknowledges the past but also examines the past in the modern context.

A Biographical Sketch of Karnad

Karnad, one of the most prominent playwrights of second half of the 20th century has successfully employed the narratives of the past in his plays owing to his exposure to the theatre conventions during his childhood. He was born in the Konkani family on 19th May 1938 in Matheran, a town near Bombay. Konkani is his mother tongue and he has learnt Marathi the language in which he got his primary education in Poona. He grew up in Sirsi, a small town in North Karnataka to which the family was shifted. Here he was exposed to Kannada and that became the language of creative expression. It was during this period that he came in contact with the players and drama artists of 'Nataka Companies' and 'Yakshagana Melas', who used to perform in Sirsi. Karnad writes about the benefits of his stay at Sirsi, 'Anyway, after we moved to Sirsi, where my father set up his practice, we attended schools. This was very good for us because we became conversant with yet another language, Kannada. I grew up in Sirsi and consider myself fortunate for having done so because that gave me opportunity to see a lot of theatre.'[21]Here he was exposed to two different theatre forms that represented two vastly different worlds. His father, a doctor by profession used to take his entire family to see plays that were staged in semi-permanent structures, on proscenium stages, with wings and drop curtains. The illumination was provided by petromax lamps. He along with the people who worked in his house used to go to watch the traditional 'Yakshagana Bayalata' performances. His father refused to go to see these performances as they were considered 'lowbrow entertainment'. Unlike Nataka Company dramas the stage for Yakshagana performances ' comprised of a platform with a canopy a bleak curtain

erected in the open air and lit by torches.' These two theatres had remained etched in his memory indelible marks that oriented his writing in the future.

Karnad's family provided him the scientific temperament that is against the conventional. Although the family belongs to Saraswat Community, the elders in the family had opened up new traditions. In a society where women's sexuality and adultery are sinful, writers like Karnad is able to deal with such themes as a very 'normal human response'. Karnad cites three reasons for such normal human response to matters related to sex and illicit relationships. First, he had seen a married woman who blossomed after she had an extra marital relationship. Therefore Karnad believes that it is not wrong if womanhood finds fulfillment in love that happens to be outside the licit relationship. Second, during his adolescence he learned that both his parents were married before they married each other. Karnad explains his mother's courage and normal human desires like this:

> In fact, my mother was a widow when she was nineteen but instead of confined within her home, she showed extraordinary courage and became a nurse. And that's how she met my father. Father had an ailing wife who required nursing. They must have lived together before they finally got married. That made me realize that my mother was human and had human desires.[22]

Third, Karnad grew up in the company of several sisters (all were cousins). This experience made him to understand the emotions and feelings of women. Karnad writes,

> I had several cousins, all girls, who lived close to us. The relationship between cousins in South Indian families is quite ambiguous. My cousins were like sisters to me yet they were potential wives. We played together as children; they shared their confidences with us as adolescents; we became aware of the ambiguity in our relationships as we grew older. This

> not only made the entire growing-up experience extremely intriguing, it also made me understand their emotions and feelings.[23]

Karnad had his primary education in Poona and high school education in Sirsi through Marathi and Kannada languages and afterwards for higher education he joined Karnataka College Dharwad from which he got B.A Degree in 1958. He had studied Mathematics and Statistics as optional subjects in B.A Programme. For his post graduation in Statistics he joined University of Mumbai. In the mean time, he received the prestigious Rhodes scholarship and went to England to do his Master's Degree. During his stay in Mumbai he had opportunity to see western plays staged in 'theatre unit'. In fact this was a unique exposure to Karnad to watch western drama models. He explains about this experience in these words,

> In Bombay I discovered Modern Theatre. I saw as many plays I could for two years filled my self with theatre of every kind: Shaw, Strindberg, Anouilh, and Sartre. A strong memory is that of watching Strindberg's *Miss Julie* directed by Ebrahim Alkazi at the Pruthvi Theatre. It left me a powerful impact… But the violence of the human psyche laid bare in the play left an indelible impact. Most of all, I was impressed by the way lights were used to determine the visual impact….[24]

This dimension of the theatre hitherto unknown to Karnad suddenly awakened in him the theatrical possibility in the modern Indian drama. He says, 'I consider this crucial to the development of modern drama because this marked the crossing over from mythological plays lit by torches and petromax lamps into modern drama and the technology of lights. The new technology was necessarily accompanied by new psychology,'[25]

During his preparation to go to England for his Master's Degree, he in fact had 'a traumatic experience' because he was the first member of the family ever to go abroad. His parents were anxious that he would settle in England itself. The decision to go to

England was arrived only after enough arguments he made for himself in this matter. Karnad writes, 'Should I at the end of studies, return home for the sake of my family, my people and my country, even at the risk of abilities and training not being fully utilized in what seemed a stifling, claustrophobic atmosphere, or should I rise above such parochial considerations and where the world drew me ?'[26] It was at this point of time (emotional turmoil) he found himself writing a play in Kannada. He was surprised at this because he had fancied himself a poet, and had written poems in English. The greater surprise was the theme of the play, for it was taken from ancient Indian mythology from which he had believed himself alienated. Thus the inner compulsions in him made him a playwright. He recalls how the first play ***Yayati*** reflected his anxieties and uncertainties, and his resentment at all who seemed to demand that the play served as an out let for his doubts and provided him with a set of values. Similar circumstances and situations compelled him to write different kinds of plays during a period of five decades. His thirteen plays include ***Yayati*** (1961), ***MaNishada*** ,a one act play,(1963), ***Tughlaq*** (1964), ***Hayavadana*** (1971), ***Anju Mallige*** (1977), ***Bali: the Sacrifice*** (1980), ***Naga-Mandala*** (1988), ***Tale-Danda*** (1990), ***The Fire and the Rain*** (1995), ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*** (1997), ***Flowers*** ,a Monologue (2004), ***Broken Images*** , a Monologue (2004),and the most recent play ***Wedding Album*** (2006).Besides these plays he has written a story titled 'Musalmana Banda! Musalmana Banda!' (2010) and his autobiography titled Adaadatha Ayusha (2010).

Karnad in England had taken up subjects like Philosophy, Political Science and Economics for his Master's Degree. It was during his three years stay in England Karnad had undergone further changes in his perceptions. He says, 'my whole life style changed; my attitude to life- especially India changed. There I learnt questioning…I began to question everything.'[27] He not only developed the skeptic attitude but also found himself immensely interested in art and culture. On his return to India in 1963, he joined Oxford

University Press, as Assistant Manager. The seven years service at Chennai offered Karnad an opportunity to get exposed to various kinds of writing in India and outside India. Here at Chennai, Karnad played significant role in the publication of ***The Striders*** (1966) the first poetry anthology of A K Ramanujan who was a guide and teacher scholar friend to him. Besides, during his stay at Chennai, he had joined as a member to the theatre troupe 'Madras Players'. It was through this troupe, he involved in the theatre activities. The wonderful thing about this is that Karnad with the help of this troupe was able to stage more than a dozen plays. The most exciting aspect is that with actors such as Pattabhirama Reddi, Snehalatha Reddi and other members of the Madras Players' he made a film based on U R Ananthamurthy's *Samsakara.* In one of the dinner parties Karnad was introduced to Dr. Saraswathi whom he married in 1980 at 'Arya Samaj' a place where his parents were married. His family that includes his wife, a son and a daughter is presently settled in Bangalore. Since his first film *Samsakara* he directed many films such as ***Vamsha Vruksha*** (1971), ***Tabbaliyu Ninaade Magane*** (1977), and ***Ondanondu Kaladalli*** (1978) of S L Bairappa, ***Kanoor Heggdithi*** (1979) of Kuvempu and others. In addition to this he directed four documentaries, three Tele-serials and The Turning Point, a serial based on scientific topics (See Appendix-1). The films, documentaries and serials have been recognized with national and international Awards (See Appendix-3).

Karnad received yet another important assignment to be the director for the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune (1974-75). Along with his full time play writing, he had taken up responsibilities as Director of Nehru Centre in London (2000-2003) , President of Karnataka Nataka Academy (1976-78), the Fulbright Scholar-in- Residence at the Department South Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago(1987-88),the Chairman of the Sangeet Nataka Academy(National Academy for the Performing Arts) New Delhi(1988-93). Karnad won several prestigious awards and honours (see

appendix-3) of which the most important are 'Padmshree' award (1974), 'Padmabhushan' award (1992), 'Jnanapith' award (1999) and Doctor of Letters (1994) degree. Besides thirteen plays, he directed (and also acted in films and serials) ten feature films, four documentaries, three teleserials and Turning Point. He also has written several articles and given many guest lectures at seminars and workshops (See Appendix-1). Karnad, who has started his dramatic career in 1960's as a writer during the post-colonial period with the rich Indian theatre as his background and the acquaintance with western theatre tradition during his studies, has been writing for a period of five decades.

The Objective and Scope of the Study

The intended study under the title ***A Study of History, Myths, Legends and Oral Traditions in the Plays of Girish Karnad*** deals with all his plays with reference to his theatrical initiatives in terms of content and structures. The study is taken up with the basic assumption that Karnad as a cultural nationalist uses ancient narratives in his plays to re appraise the past in order to revise the self perceptions of the past. The present study intends to probe into the concerns of Girish Karnad who has drawn on indigenous myths, history, and oral traditions and to critically analyze the subjects and the dramaturgy employed by him. The scholar, while studying the myths, history, and oral traditions in Karnad's plays uses terms such as 'post- independence', 'post-colonial' referring to cultural differences separating the British rule, although the colonial legacy retained its presence in literature for quite a longer time.

The literary study of the plays of Girish Karnad is taken up solely to understand and interpret the sources of themes and theatre techniques of the plays. Karnad has emerged as one of the prominent writers in the post-independence period when the Indian theatre was gradually getting rejuvenated. His contribution to the revival of Indian theatre tradition has been significant because of his profound understanding of the contemporary social and psychological issues and the interpretations of them through the plays.

Karnad's plot construction, characterization, dramatic techniques, dialogues, symbols, and use of myths, history, legends and oral traditions provide a wide spectrum for the study. The critical study intends to probe deep into the humanistic vision of Karnad and his profound concern for man. The scholar in his study tries to understand Karnad's interest in the people who are oppressed and the downtrodden, past narratives such as myths, history and oral stories, dominant beliefs and practices and their interpretations, secular and spiritual issues, hard realities of social life and national development as depicted in his plays. Thus the objectives of the study are:

1 To interpret all the thirteen plays of Karnad in order to understand the themes, the unique dramaturgy, the plot structures, characterization, dialogue and the settings.

2 To identify and study the sources Karnad has drawn to his plays.

3. To compare and contrast the original sources with the modified plots in the plays to examine the playwright's approach in handling ancient narratives.

4. Finally, to study the strategies and concerns of Karnad in his plays

The present study is more justified than ever because it is a study of the plays of an author who began writing after the formation of linguistic state of Karnataka. Political freedom, we see, has not ensured individual freedom to every citizen. The Indian leaders planned for national development and reconstruction of India even before the Indians felt the fruits of freedom. Because of the unscrupulous leaders, the independent India entered into a state of complete disillusionment. The people realized that the noble ideals such as patriotism, liberty, equality, justice and so on have been sidelined. The situation has been further worsened in the wake of globalization. Various writers or the sensitive artists have reacted to this oppressive situation in different ways. In this crucial socio-historical context, the study aims at probing deep into the plays of Karnad for finding his humanistic concerns in his plays. Karnad's source materials are perhaps his modes of expression or tools of artistic manifestation or metaphors to understand the present and

past life. In order to understand Karnad's achievement, the study tries to analyze in detail how the playwright has employed the past narratives in the plays.

Karnad's first play ***Yayati*** is based on an episode in *Mahabharata*. Pooru the obedient son of Yayati accepts his father's old age as a great sacrifice. Yayati who is cursed by the sage Shukracharya wants some one else in his kingdom to accept his old age in exchange for the youth. For this, he is ready to give money, land and even part of his kingdom. Nobody is prepared for such sacrifice. But Pooru accepts the old age of his father as he thinks that his sacrifice of his youth would forgo his feelings of unworthiness and enable him to fulfill his destiny as Chandrvamsha Prince. Pooru's wife Chitralekha is shocked by this and ends her life. At the end of the play, Yayati takes back the old age form his son. Karnad treats the mythical narrative by adding and expanding it with his own fiction to reveal the contemporary issues relating to responsibility and India's politics. The play shows that nothing is achieved by the exchange of old age with the youth, except the feeling of senselessness of a punishment meted out to the King and the guilt of shifting the burden on a young man to carry. Yayati is left to face the consequences of his own actions. Karnad revises the story and invents some new relationships applicable to modern sensibilities to discuss the theme of responsibility. This play launched Karnad's career as playwright establishing 'a proper approach to mythic narratives' that has shaped many of his mature later plays. Karnad finds the myth 'to articulate for myself a set of values that I had been unable to arrive at rationally. Whether to return home finally seemed the most minor issues; the myth had nailed me to my past'[28]. So the story of Yayati has been rearticulated as 'an ironic drama of discontent, futility and death.'[29]

Ma Nishada was written as a radio play during the initial years of the dramatic career of Karnad when Kannada literature had begun to experience and articulate modernism. With *Bhoomigeeta* of Gopalakrishna Adiga and *Kathalu-Belaku* of Adya

Rangacharya in Kannada, Kannada literature assumed significance of modernist writing. Theatre activity in the fifties and sixties was oriented towards this kind of literary experiment. It was during this period that Karnad wrote this play. This play is a re-interpretation of Seetha's tragedy in life resulting in her banishment by Rama after the latter heard the damaging remarks of a Washer-man. The play discusses how the Washer-man suffers on account of his insensitive and loose remarks about the relationship between Rama and Seetha. In the play, the Washer-man's pangs of separation are highlighted. There is a feeling of futility and purposelessness in Valmiki's regrets as he asks himself why he wrote the epic. Valmiki's attempt to retain stability of mind proves to be a vain effort. The Washer-man's search for Seetha ends on a tragic note. He is completely shattered to learn that Seetha died without uniting with Rama. The Washer-man wanted to apologize to Seetha. He is full of pain that his search for Seetha for eight years ended on a tragic note. He wanders here and there in his search and loses his wife, property and his favourite donkey. He moves from place to place to save himself from the people who are angry with him for the tragic consequences of Seetha's life. ***Ma Nishada*** dwells on the Washer-man's anguish, guilt, exile and alienation after Rama decides to send Seetha away. The play holds Washer-man responsible for Seetha's tragic life. Thus the individual actions (of Valmiki, of the Washer- man) are highlighted over collective reason in the play.

Karnad wrote ***Tughlaq*** as a reaction to the words of the noted Kannada critic Kirtinath Kurtakoti that modern Kannada drama had no first rate historical plays. Karnad found the subject Muhammad bin Tughlaq in an elementary text book. The wide range of materials available at Oxford provided the source and led Karnad to a series of revelations about the Indian past. The play, instead of de-romanticizing the cultural past, offers a serious fictional re-appraisal of a figure ridiculed in history. In view of the administration of Tughlaq, the play reveals the ruler's futile attempts to be just and liberal towards the

majority Hindu population. In the beginning of the play, Tughlaq invites his citizens to take part in the celebration of a new system of justice. This new system functions 'without any consideration of might or weakness, religion or creed.'[30] The idealistic move of Tughlaq benefits only a Muslim washer man, Aziz, who impersonates as a Hindu Brahmin and wins a case against the ruler and secures a position at the court. The next decision of Tughlaq - to move the capital of the empire from Delhi to Daulatabad, 'a city of Hindus and as the capital it will symbolize the bond between Muslims and Hindus which I wish to develop and strengthen in my kingdom'[31] doesn't get support not only from the Muslim noblemen and other leaders but also from the Hindus. When Tughlaq learns that the noblemen plot to assassinate him, he takes the transfer of the capital as an act of vengeance upon the people. The collective journey to Daulatabad is grief stricken due to starvation, disease and death. But when the fort at Daulatabad resumes, the people are hardened to a life of loneliness, punishment and cathartic violence. At the end, Tughlaq is left alone to face the famine, rebellion and economic chaos that signal the collapse of his empire. The play retrieves and makes current the relatively unfamiliar phase of Islamic imperialism in India. This phase in the history brought the 'golden age' of classical Hinduism to an end and introduced Islam as a dominant political and cultural force in the subcontinent. Today it is not present in the collective memory of the people as it was marginalized by the later Mughal and British imperialism. Therefore, the play re-inscribes the narrative of Tughlaq in the audience's memory through a detailed historical re-enactment.

The folk play, ***Hayavadana,*** written seven years after ***Tughlaq*** indicates 'a bold attempt at investing an old legend with new meaning.' [32] The play explores the problem of human identity in a world of tangled relationships. Although the original source of this play is ***Vetala Pancha Vimshika,*** Karnad has drawn heavily on Thomas Mann's re-working of the story into a novella ***The Transposed Heads***. The novella is a philosophical

version of the Indian legend about the conflict between mind and body. Karnad by adding a sub plot to the main story, a new frame in which a horse's head achieves wholeness by surrendering his human traits at the end problematizes issues of personal identity. The confusion of the identities reflects the ambiguous nature of the human personality. Karnad critically evaluates the concepts of rational and the physical to reveal the complexity of human relationships. The essential ideas like the problem of 'being' and the metaphysical anguish of the human condition are attached to the plot of transposed heads and intensified through the Hayavadana story. The ironical treatment of the five fractured personalities in the play brings home this idea. Hayavadana's problem is to get rid of his horse's head. He goes to the 'Kali' temple and threatens to chop off his head. As in the main plot, 'Kali's' ambiguous boon creates another problem while solving one. His wish was to become a complete man but 'Kali' makes him a complete horse. Hayavadana still retains his human voice. His full liberation takes place only when the five year old son of Padmini asks him to laugh and the laughter soon turns into a neigh. Interestingly it is Hayavadana's laughter which restores the abnormal boy to normalcy. It is at this point the two plots meet and separate.

The other fractured personalities are Devadatta, Kapila, Padmini and the boy, the child of Padmini. After the transposition of heads, Devadatta and Kapila become fragmented creatures. Padmini is torn between the two. The presentation of the child's predicament is in the same line. The son of Devadatta and Padmini becomes an orphan. He is first received and cared by the people of the forest but later they reject him as he is the child of the city. So he is alienated, dumb and morose. He is hopelessly incomplete. He has lost the natural ability of a child to laugh and wonder at things around him. The ironical mode of representation by revisiting to the folk narrative in *Hayavadana* establishes Karnad as a post-colonial playwright and cultural nationalist.

Karnad's departure from myth, history and folk is explicit in ***Anju Mallige*** and more evident in ***Broken Images*** and ***Wedding Album***. The Man-woman relationship in ***Anju Mallige*** is more complicated. In ***Anju Mallige*** Yamini and Satish are brother and sister. Yamini at the age of twenty one, without her knowledge is involved in sexual relationship with her brother. The playwright focusing on this incident tries to reveal the disillusionment of the ideals of post-independent India. The restlessness, anger and disappointment continue to be there throughout the play. For example- Satish is worried about his beloved Julia's disappearance; Julia is upset about Satish's friendship with Susan; Yamini becomes more restless when she sees Satish with Julia getting ready to go out for the weekend. Yamini in her confused state develops relationship with David, who had given a lift home to Julia. Yamini doesn't respond to Goutham's pure love. Instead, like Rani of ***Bali: The sacrifice***, Yamini chooses David for the sexual gratification. Yamini's jealousy forces her to tell Julia about her past life with Satish. The root cause for all these is their incest. All the characters live an unsecured and meaningless life. Yamini and Satish, living in England, fail to recognize the values and struggle to live. Thus the play discusses an unusual relationship and its effect on people.

Bali: The Sacrifice written in Kannada first is the third mythical play which employs the pre-modern source that is the thirteenth century Kannada epic ***Yashodara Charite*** originally traced back to eleventh and ninth century Sanskrit epics. The play deals with the theme of violence versus non-violence and Brahmanism versus Jainism. Karnad writes in the Preface of the play that sacrifice of animals is an age old tradition in Hinduism. The animals such as sheep, goat, buffalos, and cock were offered to please the gods. But when it was opposed by Jains and Buddhists, the Hindus used animals made up of dough for sacrificial rituals. Dough was an eatable and considered to be the 'Prasada' of gods and goddesses. Though there has been the practice of offering of figurines of animals or birds made up of gold, silver, copper and even clay, the animals or birds made

up of dough were preferred because the offering makes sense only if it is meant as food for gods, it is therefore, cooked and consumed by the devotees. The Jains still considered this sacrificial tradition cruel and de-humanizing because in their view, intended violence is equally condemnable as actual violence. Queen's adultery violates the boundaries of matrimony, caste and class. But she refuses to admit guilt for her action. Therefore, more than any other female characters in Karnad, the Queen is bold and courageous. She is self-possessed and cerebral enough not to surrender to the pressures of society. The dualisms of the earlier play ***Hayavadana*** about completeness appears again in this play. In the play, in spite of the disparity between the mahout and the royal couple the Queen unites with her servant. The play is not just about their union. It underscores the irrelevance of the union to the long term disequilibrium of the royal marriage. Thus the focus of the play is not the Queen's adultery. The play throws light on the individual who is not able to reach the stage where in he or she is justified for his or her action. The King and the Queen at the crucial point of sacrificing the cock of dough fail. The King's belief that it is a lifeless cock is disproved when the cock crows and the Queen's opposition to violence is defeated when she dies.

The folk play ***Naga-Mandala*** is like ***Hayavadana.*** The play is based on two oral tales from Karnataka which Karnad first heard from A.K. Ramanujan. Karnad wrote the play during his stay at the University of Chicago as visiting professor. Rani, the young girl (the Queen of the long tresses) is married to Appanna, a cruel and indifferent man. He locks her in his house, goes to his concubine and returns home at midday for lunch. Kappanna, informs his mother Kurudavva that Appanna still visits the concubine. Blind Kurudavva feels sad that Appanna hasn't recognized the beauty of his wife and is gallivanting around. She gives Rani a magical root to be made into a paste and given to Appanna. Kurudavva advises that the root will make Appanna fall in love with her. But Rani couldn't give the curry that was mixed with the paste of the root to her husband

because it turned red and looked horrible. Instead she pours the curry into a hole of an ant hill. A cobra, having fed this curry falls in love with Rani and visits her every night assuming her husband's form. Rani is very much confused to see how the cruel husband who visits her at midday has been transformed into a sensuous lover at night. Rani becomes pregnant. Appanna accuses her of adultery and insults her in front of the village elders. To prove her innocence as advised by the snake lover Rani accepts the 'Snake ordeal' and puts her hand into the ant hill and pulls the snake out. The snake doesn't bite her. She is proclaimed as a goddess. Appanna seeks her pardon and lives happily with her and the baby. The doppelganger technique of ***Tughlaq*** recurs in this play. The play combines two stories as frames of which the outer frame comprises the lamp flames to exchange gossip keep the playwright awake throughout the night and the inner frame has a woman who is visited by a king cobra in the form of her husband. The day-night visits of Appanna and Naga have resonance in the context of Indian families. Rani accepts the brute husband during the day and the ardent lover Naga at night because these are the conditions of her life. The folk stories in the play get a metaphorical significance to project the position of women who are victimized in the society.

Tale-Danda is Karnad's second historical play after ***Tughlaq*****,** in which he has used history of medieval India of the 12th century to depict the situation of contemporary India. Karnad when he wrote ***Tale-Danda*** perhaps realized that not only religion but also the caste system was threatening the fabric of Indian society. The social and religious movement led by Basavanna was a powerful radical movement. With the aim to abolish the caste system in Hindu society and propagate free thinking and devotional worship in place of ritualistic worship of God, the movement came to be known as Vira-Saivism or Lingayatism. This brought the followers of this sect, known as 'Sharanas' in conflict with the orthodox upper caste section of Hindu society. The conflict led to terror, violence and bloodshed. The Sharanas of the 12th century in Karnataka became victims of the wrath of

the Hindus. Karnad uses this historical narrative to analyze the present situation. ***Tale-Danda*** brings forth issues relevant to our times. Basavanna, a saint and philosopher represents religious tolerance. The followers preach the abolition of caste and gender discrimination and non-observance of Brahminical teachings and rituals. They dream of a free society. But the revolution doesn't succeed due to the opposition of the orthodox. Thus Karnad ends the play with a clear message that unless people rise above religions dogmas and social discriminations the society is doomed to suffer inhuman atrocities and bloodshed

The Fire and The Rain written after a gap of fifteen years since Karnad's previous mythical play is based on an episode from the ***Mahabharata.*** In order to appease Lord Indra for rain to the land that has been in the grip of ravaging drought for ten years 'fire sacrifice' is being conducted under the guidance of the chief priest Paravasu. Yavakri, the son of Bharadwaja in spite of his knowledge, he is not made the chief priest. When Raibhya was made the royal priest, Yavakri is enraged for he feels that his father had not been given prominence that he deserved. This leads him to go to the forest to do tough penance to please Lord Indra. Lord Indra, pleased by his penance blessed Yavakri with the knowledge of the Vedas. But, Yavakri is not able to liberate himself from the bondage of his self-hood. The knowledge makes him more miserable, wretched and boosts his pride and desire for revenge. He wishes to destroy the peace and reputation of Raibhya and his son Paravasu.

Yavakri, in an act of vengeance corners Paravasu's wife Vishaka and forces her to have sex with him. This makes Raibhya to invoke 'Brahma Rakshasa' to kill Yavakri. Yavakri is killed. Bharadwaja, hearing the death of his son, curses Raibhya that he would be killed by his own son. Paravasu mistakes his father for a wild animal and shoots him dead. In fact, Paravasu wanted to get rid of his father. He asks Arvasu to perform the last rites. Arvasu follows what he has been told and afterwards goes to the sacrificial site

where he is humiliated for patricide. Paravasu, the chief priest tells others to throw his brother for encroaching in the sacred site as a demon. He tells the King that he was a Brahmin killer. Jealousy and ego between brothers, cousins and the fight for supremacy dominate the play. Karnad by employing the archetypal myths interprets the ancient tradition. Bharadwaja and Raibhya are brothers who, out of jealousy hate and kill each other. Through such revision of the myth, the dramatist shows that knowledge without love, compassion, understanding and concern can lead to jealousy and destruction. The story of Paravasu and Yavakri get a parallel story of Arvasu and Nittilai in the play. This story develops as the antithesis to Raibhya, Paravasu and Yavakri. As an actor and as Nittilai's lover, Arvasu deviates from other characters. It is his acting in the play within the play and the sacrifice bring rain to the land. The life of instinct and emotion of other characters contrasts the life of discipline and sacrifice of Arvasu. The dualism of other plays once again occurs in this play but here the duality is between Brahmin and Shudra. Karnad's fictionalized mythical narrative in ***The Fire and the Rain*** show multi-layered reflections and meanings of human life.

The Dreams of Tipu Sultan is Karnad's third and last historical play. The play dramatizes the tragedy of a Sultan who was destroyed by the British. Karnad's source for this play is the South Indian history. Tipu Sultan (1750-99) known as Tiger resisted the British and did not bow down before them. Tipu signed the treaty with British only to save his kingdom. He died a tragic death fighting against the British. Karnad gathers facts from the history and with his imagination developed this tragic plot. Thus, the play like ***Tughlaq*** highlights the historical Tiger Tipu who lived like a tiger and died as a martyr for a noble cause.

Flowers a folk play, one of the two short monologues written by Karnad registers a shift in dramaturgy. The play is based on the story of Veeranna who belongs to Chitradurga region. The folk character of Veeranna became popular through

T.R.Subbarao's (Ta Ra Su) ***Hamsageetha***. In Subbarao's narrative Veeranna is a priest (archaka) of Hidambeshwara temple in Chithradurga district. In the play, the same Veeranna falls in love with a courtesan. He takes the offerings from the temple to her after the evening prayers. The Chieftain, one day, discovers a long hair in the Prasada and asks Veeranna for an explanation. He claims that the hair belongs to Shiva. He is challenged to prove his claim. This makes him to challenge the God to display hair or accept his head as punishment. He does penance and when the Chieftain comes on the particular day the Shivalinga does sprout long hair. When the Chieftain has pulled a hair to see whether it is real, blood begins to ooze from the Shivalinga. Veeranna for having injured the deity beheads himself in the temple.

Broken Images is another monologue that debates the politics of language in Indian literary culture. The indigenous languages and English which is also recognized as Indian language have been the languages of creative writing. Manjula Nayak, the only character in the play is a successful writer of short story and long fiction in Kannada and a teacher of English in Bangalore. The publication of her first novel in English in fact reveals that she betrayed her sister for name and fortune. The dialogue between Manjula Nayak and her doppelganger image shows that Manjula is an imposter. She has sent her sister Malini's novel as her own. The choice of the language is claimed as an inspired act of self fashioning on the author's part. But it was an act of dishonesty, desperation and cowardice. Karnad as usual in this play also manifests the 'dualities innate to human psyche and splits the persona'[33] The image in the play is another self of Manjula, a 'mediated metaphor of the protagonist's mind'[34] It continuously probes into the facts. Manjula continues explaining every layer of duplicity, discipline, and falsehood. Karnad, like in earlier plays is successful in exploring the hidden depth of the human mind not by using myth or history or folk but by using technology by which he has created a myth.

Wedding Album, Karnad's very recent play is further departure from his most successful mythical, historical or folk plays. After his ***Anju Mallige*** and ***Broken Images***, ***Wedding Album*** seems to be more mature and successful play. The institution of marriage is the central theme of the play. Karnad discusses the various issues concerning marriage in this play. The action of the play revolves round the Nadakarni family of the Saraswat community. The Sarswat community couldn't remain rigid as it was open to the influences of T.V., Video, mobile, cyber café and other communication technology. The marriage of Ashwin and Vidula is decided through internet. The Nadakarni family comprises of father, mother, Australia returned eldest daughter Hema, the youngest daughter Vidula, Rohit, the son and the cook Radhabai. Karnad through the character of Ashwin criticizes the Indian Diasporas in America for their double standards. The play ***Wedding Album*** shows three generations together. The grandmother of Vidula put garland the moment she saw her husband; her mother saw her husband once or twice before the marriage; Hema also married in the same manner; Rohit married Tapasya by betraying his beloved Isabella; the pathetic life of Yamuna etc. explicitly convey that all these women suffered and their condition is due to the male domination. The subject of the play resonates with the unequal relationship between man and woman and the deteriorated values and practices of the Hindu society. The play has been scrutinized by only a few critics. Therefore, the study of this play in this thesis may be significant as it aims at analyzing Karnad's changed approach in his articulation of the thoughts and observation of the modern life.All these plays are interpreted in detail in the succeeding chapters.

The post-colonial theatre with rich literary texts and productions suffers due to the lack of focused study of 'the formation of this complex new body of work on the sub continent.' [35] It is in this context, the study of myths, history and folk traditions in the plays of Girish Karnad would be meaningful and relevant. The idea that the Indian theatre

offers resistance to colonization or the experience of domination is too simplistic definition when it engages with the complexity of the encounter between India and the west and its results. So the opposition to imperialism is only one dimension of the post-colonial drama. Since independence, the playwrights and other theatre practitioners have embraced and rejected the colonial inheritance in terms of form, language, ideology and conventions of representation. In spite of the emphasis on anti colonial critique, the dramas remain connected to modern and post modern western practices. Moreover, through translations, adaptation and inter cultural appropriations the modern Indian theatre maintains an exclusive inter-textuality with classical and modern European and Anglo-American dramas. This engagement with the west, the classical, post-classical and colonial Indian past coexists. Therefore the Indian Theatre of the post-colonial is a multivalent cultural legacy. The narratives of myth, history, legend and oral traditions have found significance in the post-colonial drama as they enable the playwrights not only to popularize but also to question the received views of the past and the ways of knowing it.

Some of the plays are 'post-colonial' where as many of the contemporary plays are not concerned with colonialism at all but with the home, family, nation, configurations of gender and desire in the re-imagined folk cultures of the past. When these plays are analyzed in view of the oppressive structures of society, patriarchy, caste, class, and tradition, the study would get proper scholarly weight

Another significant feature of Indian post-colonial drama is that it is multi-lingual. Indian playwrights engage with a plurality of languages through original composition in one language and translation into other languages. Specifically, their concern from the indigenous language to the colonizer's language appears to be for the historical and cultural positioning. Karnad's dramas originally written in Kannada have been translated into other Indian languages as well as English for wider reach.

The third aspect about the dramas in the post-colonial age is that it is

> ….a highly self-conscious, self-reflexive period. The playwrights are engaged in creating 'new' theatre for the new nation either by drawing the sources from the pre-colonial past or in the post-colonial present. The self-positioning of the playwrights takes place first in relation to their immediate linguistic traditions and later in other languages as multi lingual contemporary dramatic canon. These issues have been discussed at various literary conventions and the theatre practitioners as a body involved in the formation of new National Canon. [36]

So the post-colonial dramas with their mythical, historical, or folk narratives represent a powerful fusion of textual complexity and performance and a wide range of aesthetic, dramaturgical and theatrical initiatives. This, indeed, determines the pre eminence of the Indian theatre. In order to study what appeal the historical and cultural past means in the present, the plays of Girish Karnad are subjected to close scrutiny in this thesis. As myths, history, legend and oral traditions have textual, archival and cultural existence, the study is more justified when it aims at exploring what role they played in the evolving ideas of nation and nationhood.

For the convenience of the study, the plays have been grouped into four categories. The grouping is not based on their chronology. But it is based on the sources the dramatist has drawn for his plays. The four groups of his plays are: Historical plays, Mythological plays, Folk plays and Contemporary Social plays. The scope of the study is as follows:

Chapter-1: Introduction

Chapter-2: History Rewritten: Karnad's Historical Plays- ***Tughlaq, Tale- Danda, The Dreams of Tipu Sultan***

Chapter-3: Myths Humanized; Karnad's Mythological Plays- ***Yayati, MaNishada*** **(one act play), and** ***Bali: The Sacrifice, The Fire and the Rain***

Chapter-4: Folk Revisited: Karnad's Folk Plays- ***Hayavadana, Naga-Mandala, Flowers*** (Monologue)

Chapter-5: Myth Creation: Karnad's Contemporary Social Plays- ***Anju Mallige, Broken Images*** (Monologue), ***Wedding Album***

Chapter-6: Conclusion.

The thesis has totally six chapters. The first chapter forms introduction comprising an analysis of the relationship between literature and history, literature and myth and literature and oral traditions, a brief history of the development Indian theatre and drama especially Kannada theatre and drama, post-colonial theatre and drama, the objective and the scope of the study, the perspective of the study, a short introductory analysis of the plays and synopsis of the thesis. The second chapter deals with the three historical plays under separate headings. The third chapter is devoted to the four mythological plays under separate headings. The fourth chapter discusses and interprets Karnad's three folk plays separately. The fifth chapter deals with the three contemporary plays. The last chapter forms the observations, findings and conclusion proceeding from the critical study of the plays.

All the thirteen plays of Karnad are subjected to a close scrutiny in this study. The study covers the themes, sources, dramaturgy, setting etc to explore how the myth, history, folk figure in these plays. As plot and dramaturgy are integral parts of the plays, the study examines them in detail. To proceed to this end, the thirteen plays of Karnad are grouped into four categories. The rationale behind this division is that the playwright keeps experimenting in his plays the subjects and dramatic techniques to explore the depths of human life and refine the mode of expression over the years. Karnad's journey in search of dramatic forms to reflect his multi-perspective approach to themes starts from

his earl play ***Yayati*** (1961) and proceeds through ***MaNishada,*** a one act play,(1963), ***Tughlaq*** (1964), ***Hayavadana*** (1971), ***Anju Mallige*** (1977), ***Bali: the Sacrifice*** (1980), ***Naga-Mandala*** (1988), ***Tale-Danda*** (1990), ***The Fire and the Rain*** (1995), ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*** (1997), ***Flowers***, a monologue (2004), ***Broken Images*** , a dramatic monologue (2004),and the most recent play ***Wedding Album*** (2006). All his plays, excluding *Flowers,* converge the separate worlds such as literary world of drama and performative world of theatre into complementary domains. It is also true that the plays, if they are stageable, find fulfillment in theatre because they are generally written with their performance in mind. As Karnad's plays are successful as 'scripted texts' and 'performative script' the scope of the study would be vast. Tutun Mukharjee writes, 'Girish Karnad is a playwright whose plays offer together a re-engagement between the apparent separated worlds and makes the autonomy and accessibility to drama and theatre complementary rather than contrasting domains.'[37] Knowing the vastness of the subject the study is restricted to the literary world of plays. Therefore the study is going to be a critical appraisal of Karnad's plays as texts that deal with the contemporary life through the subjects drawn from the past. The historical, mythological, folk and contemporary or psychological dimensions of his plays and the various plots in the plays are basically grounded in the experiential world of the readers. Perhaps this presentness of his plays attracted not only the critics but also the theatre artists across the nation and world to take up these plays for the study as well as for the stage productions. Karnad takes much pain in revising his plays continuously to make them suitable to the theatre. Almost all his plays have been revised. More over, as an actor and director, he ensures greater freedom to the directors of his plays to revise them for the stage. Therefore, on stage all his plays have been successful. As this aspect of his plays demands separate study, it is excluded from the present study.

Another significant achievement of Karnad is his painstaking attempts to translate his plays into other languages. Karnad's multi-lingual engagement in writing plays seems to be another dimension of his creative output. Although Karnad has chosen Kannada as principal language of original composition in majority of his plays because of his commitment to the indigenous language (rather than to Konkani, his mother tongue), he has written ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan***, ***Flowers***, and ***Broken Images*** in English. As a translator of his plays, Karnad has rendered all his plays both in Kannada and English with the exceptions of ***MaNishada*** (English version unpublished), ***Anju Mallige*** (English version unpublished), *and* ***Flowers*** (Kannada version unpublished). The multiple revisions of Karnad's plays in both languages would be another area for study. But the present study leaves this dimension aside as further area of research. The textual references cited in this study are to the latest editions published by the Oxford University Press, Ravi Dayal Publishers, and Manohara Grantha Mala.

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History, myths, folk in Karnad's plays reflects the pre-modern world that has the counterparts in the contemporary world. Karnad's dramatic career that began in 1960's and continued for more than five decades, exemplifies his interest and conviction in writing plays for exploration of the contemporary life. But, in fact, five decades isn't a short period to find out the development and maturity in the writer through his plays. Therefore, while analyzing the plays, the scholar tries to identify the author's shift of focus in the plays. Though his plays are classified into four types- historical, mythological, folk, and contemporary social plays, a regular pattern can be seen. The first phase of Karnad's career from 1961 to 1977 follows the pattern of myth- myth- history- folk- contemporary (***Mahabharata*** in ***Yayati, Ramayana*** in ***Naga-Mandala,*** fourteenth century north Indian history in ***Tughlaq,*** a twelfth century folk tale ***Kathasritsagara*** in ***Hayavadana*** and early post-colonial Britain in ***Anju Mallige).*** In the second phase between 1980 and 1990 the pattern repeats with a variation in the sequence- *myth- folk-*

*history (**Yashodara Charithe*** in ***Hittina Hunja,*** folktales of Karnataka in ***Naga-Mandala*** and 12th century history in ***Tale-Danda)***. The plays written during the third phase from 1994 to 2004 follows a pattern of myth- history- myth- contemporary ***(Mahabharata*** in ***Agni Mattu Male,*** the south Indian history in ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan,*** a north Karnataka folk in ***Flowers*** and the contemporary social issue in ***Broken Images***). The fourth phase has just begun with the contemporary social issue in ***Wedding Album***. The detailed interpretation of the plays has been undertaken in the following chapters.

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Notes

[1] T.S Eliot, 'Tradition and Individual Talent' ***The Book of Twentieth Century Essays,*** Ed. Ian Hamilton (Great Britain: Allan Lane The Penguin Press, 1999) 24, 25.

[2] W. H. Hudson, ***An Introduction to the study of English Literatures*** (Delhi: Surjeet publications, 2000) 100.

[3] 'Myths', ***Encyclopedia Britannica vol. 15*** (Maximums to Naples) (Kingdom of USA: 1965) 1133.

[4] 'Myths', ***Encyclopedia Britannica vol. 15,*** 1134.

[5] Nanda Kumar, ***Indian English Drama-A Study in Myths*** (New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2003) 2.

[6] According to Kuvempu, instead of trying to depict the subject as it is or the incidents as they happened, the playwrights try to give a metaphorical expression of how the subjects and incidents appear to their minds and that is 'metaphorical strategy'.

[7] Aparna Dharwadkar, ***Theatre of Independence Drama, Theory, and Urban Performance in India since 1947***(New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008) 1.

[8] Girish Karnad, ***Three Plays: Nagamandala, Hayavadana, Tughlaq*** (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008) 4.

[9] Karnad, ***Three Plays*** 4.

[10] Karnad, ***Three Plays*** 4.

[11] Karnad, ***Three Plays*** 4.

[12] Karnad, ***Three Plays*** 10.

[13] Karnad, ***Three Plays*** 11.

[14] Balwant Gargi, 'Folk Theatre in India' ***Indian drama,*** Ed. Anniaha Gowda (Mysore: Prasaranga, University of Mysore, 1974) 103.

[15] Prasanna, ***Nataka: Rangakriti*** (Sagara: Akshara Pakashana, 1985) 77, 78(my translation).

[16] Prasanna, ***Nataka: Rangakriti*** 81, 82(my translation).

[17] Dharwadkar, ***Theatre of Independence*** 4.

[18] Dharwadkar, ***Theatre of Independence*** 4.

[19] Dharwadkar, ***Theatre of Independence*** 172.

[20] Dharwadkar, ***Theatre of Independence*** 172.

[21] Tutun Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice, A Conversation with Girish Karnad', ***Girish Karnad's Plays Performance and Critical Perspectives***, Ed. Tutun Mukharjee (New Delhi: Oxford University press, 2006) 28.

[22] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…'43.

[23] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…'43.

[24] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…'29.

[25] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…'29.

[26] Girish Karnad, ***Collected plays Vol. One*** (New Delhi: Oxford University press, 2005)309.

[27] CN Ramachandran, ***Girish Karnad Mattu Avara Mooru Charithrika Natakagalu*** (Bangalore: Sapna Books House, 2008)6.

[28] Karnad, 'Appendix-1' ***Collected plays Vol One*** 303,304.

[29] Dharwadkar, 'Introduction' ***Collected plays Vol One*** XVI.

[30] Karnad, '***Tughlaq***' ***Collected plays Vol One***, 7.

[31] Karnad, '***Tughlaq***' ***Collected plays Vol One*** 8.

[32] M.K Naik, 'From Horse's Mouth: A Study of ***Hayavadana***' *Girish Karnad's plays,* Ed. Tutun Mukharjee 135.

[33] Tutun Mukharjee, 'The Splintered Self: ***A Heap of Broken Images*** at Rangashankara' ***Girish Karnad's Plays,*** Ed Tutun Mukharjee 338.

[34] Mukharjee, 'The Splintered Self…' 339.

[35] Dharwadkar, ***Theatre of Independence,*** 5.

[36] Dharwadkar, ***Theatre of Independence*** 13.

[37] Tutun Mukharjee, 'Of Text and Performance' ***Girish Karnad's Plays,*** Ed Tutun Mukharjee 17.

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Chapter-Two

History Rewritten: Karnad's History Plays

Chapter-Two

History Rewritten: Karnad's Historical Plays

Karnad's three historical plays are ***Tughlaq***, ***Tale-Danda*** and ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan***. During his formative years, Karnad has undergone a diverse influence of both the western as well as Indian literary tradition. These two influences, in fact, have shown him proper literary direction, in spite of the confusions existed regarding the drama traditions. R.K. Dhawan explains the influences as follows:

> He was exposed to a literary scene where there was a direct clash between western and native tradition. It was India of the fifties and the sixties that surfaced two streams of thoughts in all walks of life – adoption of new modernistic techniques, a legacy of the colonial rule and adherence to the rich cultural past of the country. Karnad's position was akin to that of John Dryden … who while writing his plays, he had to choose between the classical tradition and native tradition … Karnad was fascinated by the traditional ways; nonetheless the western playwrights that he read during his college days opened up for him a new world of magical possibilities.[1]

In this situation he is forced to hark back and draw sources for his plays from the immensely rich, unfathomable, unexplored holdings of Indian mythology, history and folklore. It is like a journey between past and present. Karnad's return to the Indian mythical, historical and folklore of the past for their contemporary relevance is a new literary approach. It is, in fact, a determined demystification of the dominant traditional Indian narratives to create a radically modern urban theatre. Gurjan Chaturvedi describes Karnad's contribution in the following words: 'Karnad's efforts to re-historicize the past have rejuvenated and energized the contemporary Indian theatre, expanded its limits and restored a mythical and historical dimension to our aesthetic consciousness.'[2] After

Karnad's first two plays ***Yayati*** and ***Ma Nishada*** he was literally searching for a proper theme for his next play. It was while reading Kirtinath Kurtkoti's ***History of Kannada Literature,*** he came across the observation that Indian history has not been handled by any Indian writer the way Shakespeare or Brecht used history in their plays. Besides, G.B. Joshi, publisher and writer expected Karnad to write more plays for Manohara Grantha Mala. These two influences led Karnad to go through Indian history. Interestingly, he found Tughlaq's rule as a proper subject for his third play because it reflected the present day Indian politics. Karnad in his reply to Tutun Mukharjee's question about what led him to write ***Tughlaq,*** points out,

> ….At this time I happened to read a comment by Kirtinath Kurtkoti that there were only costume plays and no historical plays in Kannada which could appeal to modern sensibilities like Shaw's plays did, for instance. It is a fact that for the Hindu mind, history is 'itihasa' or myth. History was used as a positive concept to analyze life and society by the Muslim historians. So, I thought, why not give history a try as a tool to interpret our life and times? I started some research; read some history … When I read about Mohammed bin Tughlaq, I was fascinated. How marvellous this was, I thought. Tughlaq was a brilliant individual yet is regarded as one of the biggest failures. He tried to introduce policies that seem today to be far-sighted to the point to genius, but which earned him the nick name 'Mohammed the Mad' then. He ended his career in bloodshed and chaos.[3]

So Karnad thought of using Tughlaq as a subject for his play because the paradoxical nature in Tughlaq fascinated him very much.

To counter-challenge the views of the colonizers that India doesn't have historical consciousness, and it cannot become modern and grow, the *Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge* was established in A.D 1428 at Calcutta. Initially, the member

historians of this Society like Krishna Mohan Banarjee, Bankim Chandra Chatarjee, Surendranath Banarjee and others wrote Indian history. In the twentieth century historians like Jadunath Sarkar, R.C. Majumdar and K.M. Munshi and in the last four decades, Romila Thapar, Bipinchandra and S.R. Sharma are some of the renowned Indian historians. But, while writing history the historians such as R.C. Mujumdar and Sarkar followed the British model of James Mills' ***History of British India***. In Mills' history the three ages such as Classical Age, Islamic Age and British Age are referred as the three chronological periods - ancient, medieval and modern. The same classification is seen in Mujumdar's history. Mujumdar writes, 'The onslaught of Islam … seems to mark A.D. 1000 as the beginning of the medieval age and then follows the darkness of the long night'[4]. But this dimension of Indian history is not acceptable to the Indians because during this period we came across several prosperous Hindu Empires. It was during this period significant literary activity in the regional languages took place and also the caste system was opposed by saints such as Basavanna, Purandaradasa and others. The preoccupations of the British and the Indian Nationalists prevented them from writing true history of a rich and diverse nation. This, in fact, resulted in the political crisis of today. So the medieval age was not a 'dark age' as Romila Thapar writes in *History of India,*

> The period from eighth to thirteenth centuries is sometimes referred to as 'the dark age', when the classical Hindu culture declined and political disintegration facilitated the conquest of the sub-continent by a totally foreign power. But, far from being a dark period, it is a formative period which rewards detailed study, since many institutions of present day India began to take enduring shape during this period.[5]

On the one hand, the oriental history of India intended to divide the Nation for the British rule and on the other, the history written by the Indian nationalists' opposed colonialism.

This seems to have approaches to counter each other. C.N. Ramachandran, a renowned critic records his painful observation about the sorry state of India in the following manner-

> These historians wrote history to form 'Hindu Nation' and not India. To mean, instead of writing the history of a rich and diverse Nation, they wrote the history of 'Hindu Nation'. This is the greatest irony of today. British, intolerable about the unity of India tried to divide and rule through their interpretation of India's history. Indian history that has been handled by the British or Indian Nationalists was preoccupied and did not reflect the true past. What Indian narratives the English used, have been again used by the Indian Nationalists in their ideas to form a Hindu Nation. As a tragic result of such history, the Indians are facing political crisis such as Babri Masjid – Rama Janmabhoomi, Baba Budangiri Duttapeetha, Idga Maidan etc.[6]

So, it is in this backdrop, Karnad picks up a subject from the history of the medieval age for his third play ***Tughlaq*** to 're-inscribe the narrative of Tughlaq in the audience's memory … through detailed historical re-enactment.' [7] The play retrieves the unfamiliar phase of Islamic imperialism that has been effectively marginalized by the later periods of Mughal and British imperialism to reflect the present day political, social, communal and economic crisis. In the same way for ***Tale-Danda***, he employs the 12th century historical narrative concerning the Sharana Movement of Basavanna and for ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan***, a subject from modern south Indian history.

Tughlaq

Tughlaq is Karnad's third work but the first historical play. The play discusses the rise and fall of Tughlaq, a Muslim emperor who was one of the most fascinating Kings to

occupy the throne of Delhi. Historically this King's rule is a period of unparalleled cruelty and agonizing existence for his subjects. He was unique as he was the most learned monarchs of Delhi and had great ideals and grand visions about building his empire. Karnad's primary source for the play is *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* (1357), a chronicle history written by Zia-ud-din-Barani, the court historian during Tughlaq's reign. Karnad uses Barani's narratives mixed with his own imagination in the play for the articulation of 'both political and psychological ironies.' [8]

In the play, Tughlaq is shown as intelligent, scholarly, and idealistic in his rule. He starts his rule with great ideals - to unite Hindus and Muslims in the state as they are equal in the eyes of the law. The abolition of jijiya tax reflects his grand political initiative. The introduction of copper coins on par with the silver dinars is yet another economic initiative of the King to strengthen the economy by accepting the value of the money not from the intrinsic worth of the currency but from the promise behind it. In spite of all the initiatives, Tughlaq's twenty years rule had degenerated into anarchy and his entire kingdom had become a graveyard. The play explores the motives and circumstances that led to the collapse of his empire.

The play became the most successful play on stage as it remarkably coincided with the twenty years of the post-independent India descending from a state of great visions and ideals to disillusionment and cynicism. The resonance of such sorry state of India in the mind of the author and the people of India makes the play the most relevant contemporary political play.

The playwright captures some of the significant events of Tughlaq's rule after he ascended the throne of Delhi. Tughlaq's welfare measures for the new empire of peace and amity such as equal justice; exemption of jijiya tax; banning of prayers do not ensure the welfare of his kingdom as they fail to build credibility and authenticity for him. Tughlaq fails to win the trust of his people because he has murdered his father and brother

in order to ascend the throne. His subjects do not trust him, in spite of all the welfare measures he has taken. The people suspect the King's motives. His other initiative to transfer the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad further enrages the people and evokes criticism from them. His ideals to achieve communal harmony at Daulatabad and to protect the Kingdom from the external aggression do not influence the people to support him. Instead, they try to defeat his plans by attempting to assassinate him. About such dichotomy Basavaraj S.Naikar writes,

> He appears to be an intelligent person whose way of thinking is not understood by the average man and he is taken to be a foolish and impulsive King by the people of his Kingdom. The problems in Tughlaq's kingdom are caused as much by the peculiarity of his personality as by the complex circumstances presented by the two seemingly contradictory religious beliefs and practices of his people.[9]

Tughlaq, in fact, in the beginning invites his people to Daulatabad. But when people are not ready for this, he coerces his citizens to move out of Delhi. 'Najib, I want Delhi vacated immediately. Every living soul in Delhi will leave for Daulatabad within a fortnight. Nothing but empty graveyard of Delhi will satisfy me now.'(Karnad, *Tughlaq*, 53) [10] When this decision is announced to the people, the people of Delhi express their opposition to it. Thus Karnad highlights the tyranny of the ruler under whose administration the people suffer. The unspeakable misery of the people during the journey, the corruption that was huge isolates people further from him. The utter chaos and misery in his empire was due to the lack of credibility and authenticity in the emperor. Therefore Tughlaq appears villainous and crooked to his people.

The contradiction in the character of Tughlaq is that he is not entirely wicked and tyrannical in his ways but humane and compassionate. He plans to build the empire of brotherhood and amity. The decision to transfer his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad is

based not only on his imperialistic designs but also secular ideals. The Muslin rule was restricted to North India. Daulatabad which was earlier called Devagiri/ Deogir was on the Deccan Plateau, eight hundred miles away from Delhi. Tughlaq had supervised the construction of the strongest Fort in Daulatabad. Tughlaq attempts to unite India by shifting the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. However, his desire to expand his empire and establish the capital at Daulatabad does not succeed, instead, it ends up in chaos and bloodshed because, on the one hand, his people distrusted him and on the other, they are divided into two religious groups.

Tughlaq understands the importance of token currency and as an economic initiative introduces copper coins. But this initiative gets defeated by his citizens. Although his vision is sound, when he tries to implement it, no one understands him as people are skeptical about his true intentions. His dealings with his opponents are not transparent and therefore fail to get support. His failure to understand the big gap between being clever and being credible make him unable to understand the fact that common people cannot be so readily fooled, although they say nothing and only listen, watch and understand what is taking place. Aziz and Azaam represent the common people and prove to be cleverer than the emperor. They take advantage of every law made by the King. The irony is that they follow the King literally yet succeed in fooling him. The inability of the King to understand the reality leads him to lose his credibility. It is in the absence of credibility and authenticity that the leaders lose control and remain directionless. They start drifting and end up in total failure. For example, the cancellation of jijiya tax and the introduction of copper coins should have improved the situation, instead of it, ironically, Tughlaq is criticized and suspected of his motives and also is abused. Thus the play shows the importance of credibility and authenticity in a leader.

Another reason for Tughlaq's downfall is his illegitimate means to come to power. The legitimacy of the means would certainly influence the ends. But here in Tughlaq's

case, his role in the assassination of his father and brother lead to great doubts about his proclamation of ideals about a unified state. He is left with no moral power to command his people. Therefore, it is the problem of legitimacy in him. He even uses religion for his end, in spite of the advice of Sheik Imam-ud-Din. The people accuse him of fratricide and patricide. These sins committed by Tughlaq haunt him throughout the play. These acts of murder done at the time of prayer pollute the sanctity of prayer. Tughlaq fails to understand his responsibility as a Muslim King. Sheikh Imam-ud-Din advices Tughlaq: 'The Arabs spread Islam round the world and they struggled and fought for it for seven hundred years. They are tired now, limp and exhausted… you are the most powerful king on earth today and you could spread the kingdom of heaven on earth.'(*Tu*, 26, 27) But Tughlaq does not heed to this advice. He makes prayer compulsory, then revokes his order and then reintroduces it. Thus he plays with religion for his own end. The words of Imam-ud-Din prove prophetic, 'Religion! Politics! Take heed Sultan, One day, these verbal distinctions will rip you into two.' (*Tu*, 27) His inability to understand life and act accordingly leads him to failure.

Tughlaq as an emperor has a grand vision of his empire. He expects his people to support his schemes and epoch making ideas. His genuine concerns are expressed thus: 'I have a hope of building a new future for India and I need your support for that…if you don't understand my explanations, bear with me in patience, until I can show you the results. But please don't let me down. I beg you.' (*Tu*, 49) But his people let him down. Both the empire and the emperor suffer. Tughlaq's every scheme, whether it is the new token currency or the move to Daulatabad, is doomed to failure because, no matter how detailed the blue prints are, he never takes into account the human weaknesses and the problems of his people. In fact if one is looking for the 'tragic flaw' in him it is this inability to understand human nature and make allowances for it. In other words, the failures of Tughlaq are on account of his existential alienation from his citizens and

himself as observed by Christine Gomez. In the context of religious fanaticism and hostility between Hindus and Muslims, the ideals of Tughlaq and his religious tolerance appear foolish and cunning to his citizens. So Tughlaq's continued efforts to win the confidence of his people and build an ideal empire fail terribly. The changes proposed by Tughlaq pose a threat to the conventions and beliefs of the society. Therefore he is opposed. As Christine Gomez writes, 'It is the alienation of Tughlaq from his people which is responsible for the failure of his grandiose schemes.'[11]

The play offers itself for the interpretation from Bakhtinian perspective. In Bakhtinian thought, only when there is a dialogical understanding, there is the possibility of adjustment, amendment and flexibility to ensure peace and welfare. Tughlaq and his people should form two parties in the dialogic discourse. The people signify so much that Tughlaq always should respond to them. The interaction between the two would develop into a constructive dialogue only when a viable space is left in each party for the other. In the absence of such dialogic understanding, the assertion of one's own position, utterances, beliefs, behaviour remain a monologue and confine to the individual who utters it. This situation becomes oppressive and totalitarian with the intervention of power. In the case of Tughlaq it is the absence of space to accommodate the other distances both the parties. The emperor in the play is shown as a person who is very much interested in the wellbeing of his people and kingdom. His ideals and the efforts to execute them reveal his sincerity towards the welfare of his Kingdom. He justifies the decisions he has taken to bring about changes:

> But I beg you to realize that there is no bad whim of a tyrant. Ministers and I took this decision after careful thought and discussion. My empire is large now and embraces the south and I need a capital which at its heart. Delhi is too near the border and as you well know its peace is never free from the fear of invaders. But for me the most important factor is that

> Daulatabad is a city of the Hindus and as the capital, it will symbolize the bond between Muslims and Hindus which I wish to develop and strengthen in my kingdom. I invite you all to accompany me to Daulatabad. This is only an invitation and not an order. Only those who have faith in me may come with me. With their help I shall build an empire which will be the envy of the world. (*Tu*, 10)

Though he states how careful he was in taking his decisions for strengthening the Kingdom, he fails to reach the people. There is widespread resentment and rebellion due to his failure to develop a dialogue to bridge the gap between him and his people. Karnad describes the dichotomy of Tughlaq's rule:

> My subject was the life of Muhammad Tughlaq, fourteenth century Sultan of Delhi, certainly the most brilliant individual ever to ascend the throne of Delhi and also one of biggest failures. After a reign distinguished for policies that today seem farsighted to the point of genius, but which in their day earned him the title 'Muhammad the Mad' , the sultan ended his career in bloodshed and political chaos.[12]

The total failure due to his centralizing perspectives is a reversal of the progressive possibilities. Tughlaq remains stubborn and unilateral to execute his welfare measures but surprisingly meets his disappointment and failure. The play dramatizes the gap between him and his people and also his aspirations and reality as well. In the sense of Bakhtinian dialogical co-existence, Tughlaq is unable to evolve an effective communication by involving his people in his administration. If he had accepted the perspectives of the people and their participation in all the welfare measures, there would have been amendments, flexibility and scope for different possibilities necessary to progress. But he hardened himself and did not allow the intervention or participation of

any kind. This has resulted in conflicts, struggles, resentment and total chaos in the Kingdom.

Contrary to this, the dialogue between the old man and the young man about Tughlaq's regime represents the views of the people and also their understanding of each other. In their relationship the dialogue is sharing of views and the dialogue leads to a better understanding of reality. The opening scene of the play has this dialogic:

> Old man: God, What's this country coming to!
>
> Young man: what are you worried about, grandfather?
>
> The country is in perfectly safe hands—safer than any you have seen before.
>
> Old man: I don't know. I have been alive a long time, seen many Sultans, but I never thought I would live to see a thing like this.
>
> Young man: your days are over, old man. What's the use of Sultans who didn't allow a subject within a mile's distance? This king now, he isn't afraid to be human. (*Tu*, 5)

The old man is critical about the monarch's attitude and his welfare measures. He finds faults in his administration. But the young man appreciates the ruler and shares his faith with the old man. The old man reveals how Tughlaq usurped his father's crown where as the young man thinks that the death of Tughlaq's father an accident. This is how their dialogue develops. The differences in their understanding gradually disappear and their interaction gets transformed into a dialogical understanding as they are receptive unlike Tughlaq who adopts a monologist's or unilateral stance. While pursuing his ideals, Tughlaq is aware of his subjects both followers and non-followers. However, he doesn't allow them to intervene and share their views and he remains unilateral. He says to his people: 'Come, my people, I am waiting for you. Confide in me your worries. Let me share your joys. Let us laugh and cry together and then, let's pray.' (*Tu*, 15, 16) This is,

in fact, his false sense of the inclusion of the other voice. He allows his people to be free and happy only the way he wants them to be. The monologue of Tughlaq is seen all through the play. Following words of Tughlaq are centralized:

> But for that I'll have to admit I've been wrong all along. And I have not. I have something to give, something to teach, which may open the eyes of history but I have to do it within this life. I've got to make them listen to me before I lose even that. (*Tu*, 67)
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> ....
>
> God, God in Heaven, please help me. Please don't let go of my hand. My skin drips with blood and I don't know how much of it is mine and how much of others. I started in your path, Lord, why am I wandering naked in this desert now? I started in search of you. Why have I become a pig rolling in this gory mud? Raise me. Clean me. Cover me with Your Infinite Mercy. I can only clutch at the hem of your cloak with my bloody fingers and plead. I can only beg-have pity on me. I have no one but you now. Only you...You...You...You .... (*Tu*, 79, 80)

Tughlaq's failure to execute his plans, in spite of his intelligence reveals the lack of a touch of reality and a meaningful dialogue with his citizens. The play gets the contemporary relevance for the fact that the ideas and ideals in their institutionalized and unilateral form are doomed to failure. The conflicts and struggles that threaten the unity today owe their existence to the mere introduction of democracy without much of dialogic negotiations. Therefore the opportunistic politics, communal divide, internal turmoil, disappointment and frustration are seen in the place of brotherhood, equality, and freedom in the country.

Karnad has successfully dramatized the failure of the evolvement of a bilateral dialogue to comment on the reality of the post-independent India. L.S.Gill points out

parallels between Tughlaq's regime and the administration during post-independent India. Tughlaq's policy to shift the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, change of the currency, etc has resonance in the new experiments made in India. The Five Year Plans, the introduction of Democracy, the newly prepared draft of the Constitution and many more national and international policies with the inherent contradictions in them are implicitly commented in the play. Therefore the play is the converging point between past and present. The contemporaneity of ***Tughlaq*** is as Karnad explains:

> Well, it was said there was a riot and Lohia is supposed to have asked Nehru, 'why is this bothering you?' or some such remark. It was also said that Indira Gandhi found the play commenting upon her father. The play certainly reflects the disillusionment that my generation felt with the new politics of independent India, the real politick, the cynicism, the gradual erosion of ethical norms .It is one of my more successful plays .It is produced all the time. Different generations seem to find in it some understanding of their political-social conditions.[13]

Having brought the life of Tughlaq to the theatre, Karnad has revived the Indian theatre. ***Tughlaq*** is not an ordinary chronicle play, but a very imaginative reconstruction of some of the most significant events in the life of a great King to explore the contradictions in the character of Tughlaq. Though the source of the play is from Indian history, Karnad's treatment is highly political. Religion, history and the life of people are linked with politics in the play. Religion is used by Tughlaq for his selfish ends. The religious leader Sheikh Imam-ud-din associates himself with Tughlaq, agrees to serve as Tughlaq's envoy and dissuade Ain-ul-mulk from the folly of turning against the Sultan. But Sultan easily kills him to safeguard his interest. Prayer halls are polluted with the discussions on politics. Tughlaq comes to power by murdering his father and brother while offering prayer. Amirs are worried about the intricate political ideology practiced

by the Sultan. All religious leaders are being victimized by the Sultan. Similarly history is linked with politics. Like Sheik Iman-ud-din, Barani, a historian is aligned with political activities of the Sultan. He is asked to give a practical remedy for 'the honeycomb of diseases'. Barani is surprised to see why Sultan became ruthless. In the main plot, Tughlaq though appears idealistic turns out to be inhuman as he practices selfish political game. The contradiction, such as the ideal and the real, the divine and mundane are so juxtaposed that the reader is not able to hate or love Tughlaq instead he (reader) underscores the irony behind the actions in the play. Moreover, the discussion of the people reveals the contrast between the present administration of Tughlaq and administration of the past Sultan. Tughlaq's madness and tyranny are, according to Aparna Dharwadkar, 'forms of powerlessness posing as power.'[14] Contrary to Tughlaq's character, Aziz, succeeds in his sincere and relentless efforts to exploit the situation. Aziz's desire for power appears 'purer in form'. Unlike Tughlaq's first appearance, Aziz's appearance clarifies that he is perfectly aware of the political situation in which the Sultan is trying to build an ideal state. That's why he became a Brahmin by name Vishnu Prasad. He explains the situation as follows, 'what would happen to the King's imperial justice? A Muslim plaintiff against a Muslim King? I mean, where is the question of justice there? Where is the equality between Hindus and Muslims? If on the other hand the plaintiff is a Hindu...well, you saw the crowd?' (*Tu*, 12) Having begun a political career like this, Aziz gradually becomes more and more powerful while Tughlaq with his ideals becomes more and more powerless. Aziz, an ordinary washer man involves in politics as he has seen opportunities in it. '...only a few months in Delhi and I have discovered a whole new world – politics. My dear fellow, that's where our future is – politics! It's a beautiful world – wealth, success, position, power and yet it's full of brainless people, people with not an idea in their head.' (*Tu*, 59) Karnad's dialogue

reinforces the political theme of the play. The language is simple, easy and precise and has poetic value. Muhammad's answer to the step-mother's question is an example.

> Muhammad (theatrical): Pray to the Almighty to save me from sleep. All day long I have to worry about tomorrow but it's only when the night falls that I can step beyond all that. I look at the Pleiades and I think of Ibn –ul-Mottazz who thought it was an ostrich egg and Dur-rumma who thought it was a swallow…. And don't tell me to go and get married and breed a family because I want' sleep. (*Tu*, 15)

Karnad with a variety of theatrical techniques creates visual and auditory images. Besides, the powerful language, the spectacle, quick shift of scenes, blackout and symbols are a few theatrical devices experimented to produce the dramatic effect. The visual aspects (spectacle) of the play are scenes, lighting, costume, make-up and the business and movement of the actors. The appearance of Tughlaq after the announcement about the judgment of the Chief Justice in favour of Vishnu Prasad adds up to the visual effect. Likewise, the announcement pertaining to the arrival of Sheikh Iman-ud-din, Muezzin's Call for prayer, the marching of the Amirs towards the throne of Tughlaq, the announcement about the shifting of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, the call for the banning of prayer and the revival of it, and the anguish expressed by the common masses during the shift of the capital, are some of the elements of spectacle in the play that reinforce the political theme.

There are thirteen scenes in the play which run into ninety nine pages. The scene of action is almost suddenly shifted from the yard in front of the chief court of justice to a room in the palace, then to the yard in front of the big Mosque, again to the palace, then to a house in Delhi, and then to the palace again. It shifts to a camp on the Delhi-Daulatabad road. Suddenly it goes to the fort of Daulatabad and back to the palace. The Aziz-Azaam hypocrisy, Tughlaq's attempts to levy heavy taxes on the poor farmers, his

orders to change the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, the murder of Sheik-Imam-ud-Din, the futile conspiracy of the disgruntled Amirs to kill the Sultan while at prayer, his cruel punishment to his step-mother, Aziz's impersonation of the invitee Caliph Ghiyas and its consequences, and finally the fall of the Sultan are ironically presented. Moreover, the forward and backward movements of the scenes keep the audience focused on the character.

Furthermore, the dramatic irony and symbols used in the play make the play more unique and profound. Both verbal and situational ironies operate in the play. The manner in which prayer is sought to be used as an instrument of murder against the very man who has made prayers compulsory in the state, and the role played by Aziz are examples of irony of situation. The past Sultans could not bear the weight of their crown. They could not leave it aside. So they died senile in their youth or they were rendered. Barani, a historian, is interested in playing chess with the shadows of the dead. It is ironical that Tughlaq and Sheikh look alike but they do not think alike. The prayer, sleep, the game of chess and the rose have symbolic significance. Prayer reveals Tughlaq's religious idealism and an unconscious need for divine protection and guidance in an hour of anguish. The prayer that was made compulsory was banned and revived later. Sleep reveals the rest needed. Tughlaq's efforts to avoid sleep do not succeed. He falls asleep. The rose garden represents the gradual decay of Tughlaq's dreams. The game of chess symbolizes the political game of Tughlaq. Tughlaq, the most intelligent is defeated by an ordinary washer man in the game. Karnad has dramatized the historical character to represent the duality of Mohammad. U.R.Anantha Murthy discusses the irony of the play as,

> Although the theme of the play is from history-there are many such plays in Kannada –Karnad's treatment of the theme is not historical. Take for instance, the use of Karnad makes use of the leitmotiv of the play,

> 'prayer', in the scene where Muslim Chieftains along with Sheik Shams-ud-din, a pacifist priest, conspire to murder Tughlaq while at prayer. The use of prayer for murder is reminiscent of what Tughlaq himself did to kill his father. That prayer, which is most dear to Tughlaq, is vitiated by him as well as his enemies, is symbolic of the fact that his life is corrupted at its very source. The whole episode is ironic.[15]

He further says that there is no other play in Kannada comparable to *Tughlaq* in its depth and range, for the play relates the character of Tughlaq to philosophical questions on the nature of man and the destiny of a whole kingdom which a dreamer like him controls. So *Tughlaq* 'is essentially modern, may be more modern than most Indian plays written in English, despite being called a historical play.' [16] The historical structure in this play has been invested with the imaginative 'symbolical reshaping'. The revision of the fourteenth century history serves as both 'heroic' and 'satiric' modes to explore the contradictions in the character of Tughlaq. In spite of Tughlaq's secular outlook, generosity, personal ability, extraordinary intelligence, farsightedness, he becomes more and more unpopular and at last fails in all his welfare measures. The flaw in him as discussed before, on the one hand, is the lack of credibility, authenticity and legitimacy in him and on the other he has functioned in a situation where there is rivalry and enmity between Hindus and Muslims. Therefore it is a conflict between theology and politics. Tughlaq who stood for administrative reforms, for implementing the ordinances of Hindu-Muslim amity, for reorganizing the administrative machinery and taxation structures and for establishing an egalitarian society in which all enjoy justice, equality and fundamental rights fails because in the course of his administration he has deviated from the theological practices. His alienation from religion enrages the orthodox people. They condemn and rebel against Tughlaq because of his tyrannical rule. The play is relevant to modern India as the nation has been passing through a crucial stage. In a country where the communal hatred

exists, the political leaders are trying to bring about harmony between Hindus and Muslims. Karnad by visiting history tries to explore solutions to the present problems. His words, 'turning to traditions and history now and seeking an answer there' show how relevant the play is. Karnad combines religion and politics of an idealist and farsighted Tughlaq to reveal that idealism of a ruler fails and ruins the idealist. The ideas such as secularism, equality and unity in India are ahead of the times. The life of common man is still led by the saints and religious leaders than by the politicians. But, in fact, the people are fooled and exploited by the saints and politicians. Tughlaq who appears religious in the beginning commits a series of murders to retain his power. He commits patricide, fratricide and kills leaders like Imam-ud-Din, Shihab-ud-din and even his step- mother to retain his kingship. His pretensions as a follower of religion and the use of religion for political game destroy him and his kingdom. There are two Tughlaqs in him-an idealist and a tyrant. There is a transformation from an idealist to a tyrant or from the most powerful and successful monarch to the most powerless and helpless man. Religion cannot be a political weapon and it ought not to be used to achieve political ends. It is quite clear in the play that the playwright's articulation of the historical narrative through 'heroic' and 'satiric' modes revises the readers' perceptions of the past regarding its relevance.

Tale-Danda

Tale-Danda is Karnad's second historical play. It is based on the 12th century historical narrative. The irony of the 'Presentness of the Past' [17] narrative that has been employed in ***Tale- Danda*** is that it resembles the present day violence that springs out of the ignorance of the people. 'History repeats itself' is an often quoted statement to talk about the mistakes that a community or a society frequently commits in spite of the reformative movements and the corrective measures.

> I wrote ***Tale-Danda*** (1993) in 1989 when the 'Mandir' and the 'Mandal' movements were beginning to show again how relevant the questions posed by these thinkers were for our age. The horror of subsequent events and the religious fanaticism that has gripped our national life today have only proved how dangerous it is to ignore the solutions they offered. (*Tale-Danda*, Preface) [18]

These words of Karnad in the Preface of the play show the relevance of the play. Similar to the 'Mandir' and 'Mandal' movements, the Sharana movement in the Kingdom of Kalyan of 12th century ended in terror and bloodshed. ***Tale Danda*** dramatizes the story of a community settled in Kalyan within the present day geographical boundaries of Karnataka. The year AD 1168 is marked with the ascendance of Basavanna, a mystic saint-poet. He was appointed by the King, Bijjala as an officer to supervise the royal treasury. Basavanna's secular and egalitarian thoughts became popular and thousands of people followed him as disciples ('Sharanas'). But this 'Sharana' movement ultimately ended tragically due to the sheer and violent opposition of the orthodox upper caste people. The irony is that the reformation intended by Basavanna and his followers through a casteless society should fail for the want of support from all the sections of the society including the orthodox people. The history of 12th century seems to be an appropriate metaphor to the present day Communal and Caste rifts. Karnad has employed this historical narrative in ***Tale-Danda*** to review the past for its presentness.

The 12th century communal struggle in the city of Kalyan in North Karnataka during Bijjala's reign exposes the caste ridden Indian society. Bijjala's finance minister Basavanna, inspired by Allama Prabhu unites his people in the name of Lord Shiva. Large numbers of people give up their caste and join the group of 'Sharana's' or devotees of Lord Shiva. Their language for communication is Kannada. They oppose all the inhuman traditions including idolatry as they consider the human body as the temple, the legs as

pillars, and the head as the golden cupola. They believe in social and gender equality. Bijjala, a barber by caste admires and supports the Sharana movement. He explains to his wife Rambhavati about his background and why he has faith in Basavanna.

> But I am a Kalachurya Kattachura. A barber. His Majesty King Bijjala is a barber by caste. For ten generations my forefathers ravaged the land as robber barons. For another five they ruled as the trusted feudatories of the emperor him self. They married in to every royal family in sight. Bribed generations of Brahmins with millions of cows. All this so they could have the caste of Kshathriya branded on their heads. ….one's caste is like the skin on one's body. You can peel it off top to toe, but when the new skin forms, there you are again a barber- a Shepherd – scavenger! In all my sixty two years, the only people who have looked me in the eye without a reference to my lowly birth lurking deep in their eyes are the 'Sharanas', Basavanna and his men. They treat me – as what? – As a human being. Basavanna wants to eradicate the caste structure, wipe it off the face of the earth. Annihilate the Varna system. What a vision! …. They sit together, eat together, and argue about God together indifference to caste, birth or station. (*TD*, 15)

Bijjala has realized the need for such social change and therefore he has taken Basavanna, as his confidante and the officer -in-charge of the royal treasury. He loves his son Sovideva but hates his unprincely behaviour. Sovideva resents the partiality of his father who had made all the sons of his other wives local lords except him. Bijjala is happy that the 'Sharanas' are hardworking, honest and assets to his Kingdom. When Manchanna Kramita accuses Basavanna, Bijjala astonishes him with his admiration of the 'Sharanas'. He says,

> I came to this city ten years ago and I brought Basavanna with me as my treasurer. Along with him came the Sharanas, each one convinced that work is worship, that his work is no mere profession but a calling. Every Sharana seeks only to earn the day's keep. Makes no extra demands, treats profits with contempt. So who benefits? From every corner of the country, trade and commerce have come pouring into Kalyan and now the city is bursting at its seams with money and activities. Even those who despise the Sharana's for their beliefs need them for their economic enterprise … (*TD*, 24)

The support of Bijjala leads the 'Sharana' movement to flourish in his Kingdom. Unlike Bijjala, his son Sovideva hates Basavanna and his men. He suspects and is upset that Basavanna uses money for his 'Sharanas'. Out of suspicion, in the absence of Bijjala he opens treasury to prove that Basavanna has embezzled the money. Sovideva fails in this because large numbers of 'Sharanas' under the guidance of Jagadeva surround the treasury and prevent him from tampering. Basavanna arrives and takes Sovideva into custody. He finds no embezzlement is made after verification. Sovideva is humiliated and hurt by this. But people consider this as a great miracle. Bijjala accuses Sovideva severely for interfering in the administration. The humiliation makes Sovideva to avenge his father and Basavanna. He is supported by Damodara Bhatta and Manchanna Kramita as they were also unhappy about Basavanna's mission and Bijjala's support to it. These three hatch a plot against the King.

Jagadeva, the ardent follower of Basavanna goes straight home to attend on his father. But his father dies leaving remorse on Jagadeva. Jagadeva attends all the funeral rites, a tradition of Hindu society. In spite of his 'Sharana' faith, Jagadeva's resorting to the age old practices appears very ironical because his 'Sharana' faith had hardened him to oppose every such practice. But after Basavanna's arrival to his house, Jagadeva is

convinced of his betrayal and agrees with Basavanna in his condemnation of the violence of 'Sharanas' against Jains at Maddur. Jagadeva's anger against Basavanna, because the latter had earned the name at the treasury, as people considered it a miracle is calmed down and pacified through a prayer with Basavanna.

In the first scene of act two 'Sharanas' assemble at Basavanna's house. The 'Sharanas', in the presence of Basavanna, discuss and decide the inter-caste marriage between Sheelavanta, a cobbler's son and Kalavati, a Brahmin girl. Haralayya couple and Madhuvarasa couple ask Basavanna to bless their children and invite him to the wedding. Basavanna is shocked and does not speak for a while. Both parents are perplexed and angry with Basavanna. Basavanna after a while explains to them his pragmatism.

> Until now it was only a matter of theoretical speculation. But this is real. The orthodox will see this mingling of caste as a blow at the very roots of Varnashrama Dharma. Bigotry has not faced such a challenge in two thousand years. I need hardly describe what venom will gush out, what hatred will erupt once the news spreads. …It's a question of life and death for these children. From tomorrow the wrath of the bigoted will pursue them like a swarm of snakes, to strike as they pause to put up a roof or light an oven. Who will protect them then, Elementary prudence demands that … (*TD*, 38)

Basavanna's pragmatism and his apprehensions are misunderstood by his disciples. Sheelavanta, when asked about his marriage, says though he likes Kalavati he doesn't want to marry her because she cannot stand the smell of the leather and the gibes of the children such as 'Cobbler's priestess'. Kalavati's mother agrees to it. Haralayya thinks that his son would not be allowed to change his vocation by the people of other castes. Lalita at this moment shares the prophecy made by her mother-in-law: 'Rivers of blood will flow if the marriage takes place. She said human limbs will rot in the streets.' (*TD*,

41, 42) The long discussion ends with Basavanna's blessings and decision to hold the marriage. Thinking about the communal violence that will spring out in the Kingdom, Bijjala appeals Basavanna to stop the inter-caste marriage. Basavanna says it is decided by the 'Sharanas' and if the marriage is banned he will sit with his 'Sharanas' in front of the palace. But as Bijjala knows the strength of 'Sharanas' gives protection to the marriage. The 'Sharanas' are successful and happy about the wedding, whereas the orthodox Hindus are hurt and enraged.

In the next scene at the courtesan's house, Damodara Bhatta wishes to meet Sovideva to discuss the inter-caste marriage. The courtesan, Indrani doesn't find any reason in their being upset. But Damodara Bhatta says that the marriage is a 'great sacrilege' and it is horrifying to all the Brahmins. But Indrani has high views about the 'Sharanas'. According to her, the Sharanas have done much to the down trodden and destitute. Damodara Bhatta continues criticizing not only Basavanna but also Bijjala for supporting 'Sharanas'. Meanwhile Manchanna Kramita arrives with a few courtiers and proclaims Sovideva with many titles as if he is the King.

Later, in the third act Karnad shows the imprisonment of Bijjala by Sovideva under the guidance of Damodara Bhatta and Manchanna Kramita. Basavanna wishes to save the king but most of the 'Sharanas' refuse to go with him for the release of the King. Basavanna and a few 'Sharanas' visit Bijjala. After advising the King to cling to Lord Shiva, Basavanna leaves for Kappadi to seek salvation. Sovideva, who has assumed himself as the King persecutes the 'Sharanas' mercilessly. As Basavanna has left for Kappadi, the 'Sharanas' are confused and their unity is broken. Damodara Bhatta and Manchanna feel satisfied. But, when Manchanna advises Sovideva to destroy all the Sharanas and visit the in- laws for safety, Sovideva leaves for his father -in-law's house.
In the next scene, the disturbed Jagadeva and a few other 'Sharanas' decide to avenge Sovideva. When they enter the palace through a secret passage, they do not find

Sovideva. They go further to the inner shrine of Lord Shiva and find Bijjala alone. Jagadeva kills Bijjala and afterwards commits suicide in spite of the advice of other 'Sharanas'.

In the last scene Sovideva learns from the messengers about the rapes, murders, looting and rioting. The news enrages Sovideva who in turn blames Domadara Bhatta. He orders the guard to shut him up. The guard kills him at once. Sovideva then instructs them to expel all the 'Sharanas', foreigners, and free thinkers. At the court the crowning ceremony takes place while the city of Kalyan is burning. Ultimately the Basavanna movement meets its tragic end in the hands of orthodox people. Karnad tries to trace the causes behind the failure of such egalitarian movement. The play's contemporaneity has been felt during the violence and communal unrest in India on account of 'Mandir' and 'Mandal' movements. Therefore the relevance of the play is its contemporary subject. The 'social deformity', illustrated in its various aspects in ***Tale-Danda*** continues in spite of the social, economic and political changes in the Indian society. Karnad 're-examines the need and structure of the caste system of India that was once, in the past hailed as an ideal one'[19]

The subtle tragic plot of this play is based on the historical and political situation in the 12th century. The play, through the conflict and confrontation between the 'Sharanas' and orthodox people implies the meaning of caste and religion represented by the 'Sharana' movement condemning idolatry and temple worship and believing in equality of sexes and hard work. The failure of this 'Sharana' movement is because of the ignorance and blind beliefs of the people and more significantly because of religious intolerance. Thus, like in *Tughlaq* Karnad, in ***Tale-Danda*** has been able to articulate his humanistic thoughts through the review of the historical narratives.

The Basavanna movement of 12th century was the most popular, progressive, humanistic and socio-religious movement. Though many Kannada writers employed this

subject (***Jagajyothi Basaveshwara*** of Company Nataka ***Kranti Kalyan*** of B. Puttaswamayya; ***Sankranti*** of Lankesh; ***Kettitu Kalyana*** of Kalburgi; ***Mahachaitra*** of H.S. Shivaprakash; ***Dharmakarana*** of P.V. Narayana), Karnad unlike others through the play ' tries to address issues of religious beliefs that create social and political crises.'[20] Karnad says, 'I wanted to present the consequences of religious fanaticism and to highlight the futility of such attitudes in the face of people's aspiration for happiness, peace and prosperity.'[21]Karnad's return to historical narratives is to use collective memory to build the plot. But while interpreting the historical incidents or personalities, Karnad instead of deviating tries to give credible artistic expression to the available historical documents.

The characters such as Basavanna, Bijjala, Manchanna Kramita, Gangambike, Madhuvarasa, Haralayya and others; Bijjala's freeing from Chalukyas, Basavanna's appointment as Treasurer, the inter-caste marriage and its adverse consequences are in tune with the historical texts. The only change Karnad has made in this play is that he has dropped Basavanna's second wife Naglambike. Bijjala and Basavanna in *Tale Danda* are neither divine nor villains. Basavanna is shown as a great humanist and poet-saint and Bijjala as a great administrator who respects human values. But both of them fail in their attempts to build a new society. The play discusses the socio-religions reasons behind their failures. The contrasts in the play between the King and the Citizens, Brahmin and Shudhra, static and non-static, written and folk, Sanskrit and Kannada find a proper metaphor in the following lines as observed by C.N. Ramachandran

He who can turn
Space into form
He alone is a Sharana
He who can turn form into space,
He alone can experience the linga

If these two became one,

Would there be a way

Into you, O, Lord

Of the Meeting Rivers? (*TD*, 69, 70)

The play examines the society at different levels and suggests multiple meanings. The death of Sambashiva Shastri in the first scene and the coronation of Sovideva at the end of the play symbolize a similar social system. The Brahmin as he dies thinks of the cremation and shaving of his wife's head. He represents the Brahmin community. Sovideva's coronation at the backdrop of the cries and screams of children and women reestablishes the orthodox society once again, a tragic irony when Basavanna attempts to find an alternative system in an orthodox Hindu society. The play shows the cruel beliefs and practices, the inhuman caste system, the male domination and all the meaningless practices throughout. Basavanna's efforts to create an alternative society that nourishes love, friendship, equality, respect are indeed the solutions to the problems of the rigid system. But Basavanna is defeated by the orthodox Brahmins and his own disciples who have outgrown him. Damodara Bhatta and Manchanna Kramita with Sovideva suppress the 'Sharana' movement. In the case of inter-caste marriage between Sheelavantha and Kalavati, the 'Sharanas' do not understand the humanistic concern of Basavanna. For Basavanna 'It is a question of living, breathing human beings. A question that boy's life, that girl's safety' (*TD*, 44) He feels, 'we are not ready for the kind of revolution this wedding is. We haven't worked long enough or hard enough!' (*TD*, 44) But the Sharanas go ahead with their decision and as a result the entire Kingdom suffers. Thus, the play shows that in the course of the socio-religions movements, the followers outgrow their leader and take decisions on their own.

At another level the play explores the Kingship and its nature. Basavanna explains its nature as 'Kingship is a calling, a source of living. Yes, but also a duty and a service to

humanity. It is not an inheritance, not a family gift but a right to be earned, to be justified by diligent application.' (*TD*, 20) Though Bijjala says that he knows this, he doesn't appear he has understood it. For him the Kingship is wars and titles and the stone inscriptions. Basavanna angrily reacts to Bijjala and Manchanna Kramita about the new titles and inscription, 'A new rock inscription, and to justify it, a new campaign. A dozen battles, a hundred new hero stones, to be greeted by the wails of a few thousand fresh widows and orphans. And, then to finance this senseless self-indulgence, another wave of taxes, demands and extortions.' (*TD*, 18) He further speaks of his philosophy, 'Inscriptions need eyes to decipher them, and panegyrics need tongues to sing them. Meaning is generated by this moving body and it is this human body that should be our primary concern.' (*TD*, 18) The irony is that neither Bijjala nor orthodox Brahmins nor even the 'Sharanas' understand this philosophy. The other dimension of a newly evolved system is that the followers cannot adjust themselves to it so quickly. Widespread resistance, uprootedness, insecurity, protests and even clashes spring out of it. At one point Haralayya says how his mother refused to become a 'Sharana' – 'we became 'Sharanas'. But mother refused to do so. She wept and cried that she could not forsake our family gods. So we parted. I haven't seen her since. She hasn't looked at us.' (*TD*, 41) Lalita quotes prophesy made by her mother-in-law- 'Rivers of blood will flow if the marriage takes place, She said, human limbs will rot in the streets. This is not any stranger – This is Sheela's own grandmother speaking!' (*TD*, 41, 41) Jaganna's absence at home while his father was dying is viewed by Bhagirathi as, 'why can't that Basavanna see some sense? In every household in Kalyan, it's the same story, father against son, brother against brother.' (*TD*, 2) The inter-caste marriage is seen from two perspectives. For orthodox people it was as Damodara Bhatta says,

> This marriage arranged by Sharanas was no trifling matter. On the one hand stands the Vedic Dharma, which has branched out in strength over

> the centuries and now shades the whole of Aryavarta. On the other, there is the Sharana movement-a pestilence-but of a virulence not seen since the days of the Buddha. These two face each other in implacable hostility. The battle is without quarter. And if your Majesty had not intervened, the 'Sharanas' would have met their fate on the day of that infamous wedding. (*TD*, 64, 65)

To a 'Sharana', 'the alliance is a cause for celebration' (*TD*, 38) because the ultimate wish is to have a casteless society.

The play, significantly throws light on the fact that a leader (here Basavanna) loses his control over the movement, as the movement grows and all its principles get dimmed. The followers turn into fundamentalists and start hating other communities and religions. The 'Sharanas' occupy a Jain Temple and threaten to smash the idols and turn it into a Shiva temple. The great paradox is that what Basavanna opposed (static things, temples, monuments and any text) was needed for the 'Sharanas' to establish themselves as a separate religion. Basavanna is very much annoyed by his 'Sharanas'. He answers them when asked about the miracles he performed, 'How many shall I say? Will eighty eight do? Showing off my eighty -eight miracles my 'bhakti' has become a carnival wardrobe' (*TD*, 25)

The movement started with the principle of equality, in fact, at a later stage follows leader -follower tradition. Although 'Sharanas' should support Bijjala when he was imprisoned, they expect Basavanna to command them. Basavanna doesn't do it instead; he leaves it to the 'Sharanas' to decide. He says, 'ours is a spiritual brotherhood, a community of experience. To tell any 'Sharana' what to do would be an insult him.' (*TD*, 68) As a result of this Basavanna is accompanied by only a few 'Sharanas' to the court.

Karnad's concern to build a new society in India by revisiting to history has led him to write ***Tughlaq***, ***Tale Danda*** and the ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan***. Tughlaq, Basavanna and Tipu tried to build a new society at different times. But all the three have failed in it. Therefore, perhaps Karnad is suggesting that the Nation needs to go back to its history to learn from its past mistakes and avoid it in future. Basavanna's prime wish was to lead his people to a free society of equality like Gandhi who led India to a political and social freedom. But the irony is that the very cause which attracts mobs to a certain revolution as soon as their ends are achieved they revert to their old selves and mentality. This leads the people to reject and disregard not only the ideals but also the person behind it. Basavanna-Jagadeva relationship suggests this meaning. The unpreparedness among Sharanas to continue their movement is on account of sidelining the six stages of devotion envisaged by Basavanna. The six stages comprise – 'bhakta' phase, 'maheshwara' phase, 'prasadi' phase, 'prana linga' phase, 'sharana' phase and 'aikya' phase ('Bhakti', 'Nishte', 'Aradhana', 'Anubhava', 'Ananda' and 'Samaras'). In the first phase the individual engages in devotion and worship; second, he practices discipline; third, he receives the Lord Shiva, fourth he experiences the Lord; fifth, he feels the divine joy; and finally he unites with the linga completely. Basavanna has crossed his path through these hard phases but his disciples as soon as they get into it forget the ultimate goal. Therefore the movement has failed to achieve what it intends. Basavanna is completely depressed by this. Having failed to convert the extremists, Basavanna leaves Kalyan and retreats at Kappadi, the place where three rivers meet. Therefore any movement if it is not governed by the farsighted visions and inner maturity, it is bound to meet the tragic end. Tughlaq has failed because of his ignorance about reality and the 'Sharana' movement has failed because of the lack of maturity among the 'Sharanas' and the opposition of the the orthodox people.

Karnad wrote the play when the Republic of India was threatened of its safety by the chaotic situations in several areas on account of caste as well as religious conflicts. Karnad explains the context:

> … Tensions between the cultural past of the country and its colonial past, between the attractions of the western thought and our own traditions, and finally between the various visions of the future that opened up once the common cause of political freedom was achieved. This is the historical context that gave rise to my play and those of my contemporaries. [22]

In ***Tale-Danda*** Karnad employs the 12th century history to comment on the miserable and disillusioned state of modern India. In other words the play engages in the intellectual debate of the present day communal problems. The play offers an illustration of how history is created and repeated. Regale Burke discusses the contemporary relevance of the play in the following words:

> Karnad has taken facts straight out of history and dramatized them for his purpose. What is most striking about the play is that Karnad is effortlessly able to relate that scenario of an ancient Indian kingdom to modern day India though separated by centuries, as if he were talking about events occurring within the same period of time. This is also a pointer to the static and stagnant state that our country has been over the centuries. The admirable contemporaneity of the play lies in its expression of a reality that is rooted in a particular time and place, that which reflects the experiences and perceptions of an entire people. The social discrimination, political tyranny, and religious fanaticism portrayed in the play are issues with which even the twenty first century generation of India is familiar with. [23]

So it is ironical that what destroyed the ideal 'Sharana' movement during 12th century is a threat even today to the Indian society. Both fanatics and the so called secularists pose danger and cause deterioration rather than the welfare of the nation. Regarding the inspiration behind writing this play, Karnad was asked whether any contemporary political event prompted him to choose a theme that focused on the caste probem. During the play rendering by the dramatist at the Natya Shodh Samthan, Kolkata, Karnad said that it was not any particular event but every event that occurred inspired him to write a play of this kind. So the 'real-politics' of contemporary society had inspired him to write both *Tale-Danda* and *Tughlaq*.

The Dreams of Tipu Sultan

The Dreams of Tipu Sultan depicts the tragedy of Tipu a warrior King. He was destroyed by the British for his resistance to them, and his visions about the welfare of his kingdom. Referring to the tragedy of Tipu Aparna Dhawadkar writes: 'The tragedy of Tipu's fall is not only that it made way for a full-scale colonial take over, but that it destroyed a visionary who shared the modernizing impulses of the European enlightenment could meet the English on their own terms.' [24] Tipu Sultan (1759-1799), Karnad's central character in the play resists the British and does not yield to their motives. The treaty that he was forced to sign was done for the sake of his Kingdom. Karnad chose this personality from the history of Karnataka for this play which he wrote for BBC. The BBC had commissioned him to write a play to celebrate fifty years of Indian's freedom in 1996. 'The plot obviously had to deal with some aspect of Indo-British relations and I immediately thought of Tipu Sultan, one of the most politically perceptive and tragic figures in modern history.'[25] Therefore, Karnad in the play once again likes 'more engagement with history offering fresh perspectives.' [26]

The play deals with the dreams secretly written by Tipu to examine Tipu's political visions, religious tolerance, resistance to the British, warrior life, patriotism and

all the welfare measures. The source materials in Karnad's plays acquire social, moral, cultural and political ramifications and therefore their reinterpretations reveal contemporaneity. This play reconstructs Tipu's warrior life. He is a man with a keen, enquiring mind and desire to learn and move ahead. In the dramatization of his life, Karnad has mixed up reality and dream. Through this mixing up of dream and the real incidents, the playwright is able to go beyond the facts and dates in his exploration of the character. Elizabeth Roy writes that the play rescues Tipu from colonial perception and presents him refracted through history in different perspective, that of independent of India. So, 'it stands before us as a protest against the English reading of history and in favour of a warrior who had the sense of the British as foreigners.' [27]

On Tipu Sultan many stories, novels and dramas have been written in Kannada. Many research books and articles are also published. ***Tipu Sultan*** (1982) of Prof. Sheik Ali; ***Sultan Tipu*** (1989) of H.S. Shivaprakash in Kannada; ***The Sword of Tipu Sultan*** (TV Serial appeared in Hindi) of Gidwani in English; ***Tipu Sultan A great Martyr*** edited by Prof. B. Sheik Ali (1993) and ***Tipu Sultan Kannada Drohiye*** (2006), a collection of 44 articles (written on the occasion of the heated arguments for and against a minister in Karnataka) are some of them. Tipu is fresh in the collective memory of the people. Karnad tries to humanize this character and reflect the visions of Tipu. Karnad feels 'it is not my intension to reform him or make him out to be what he is not.'[28] About Tipu's religious and human concern Karnad writes:

> If there is any need to mount a defence, one can always point out that temples were plundered by Hindus themselves sometimes. In fact, it is a documented fact that Tipu paid for the repair and renovation of temples, a Hanuman temple in particular and gave sustenance to many priests and holy men and the conversions of Nairs and Coorgs were a kind of punishment. [29]

For Karnad Tipu appears 'quite humane' unlike British and Marathas. In spite of his love for his religion, he was a great warrior administrator and a trader and more than that a great patriot. It is the dreams that are recorded by Tipu during his forty years of life interested Karnad to examine whether they 'dictated his actions'. Karnad is curious to explore the historical fact in his articulation of historical narratives. The history written by the British, Karnad thinks, hasn't treated Tipu fairly. Therefore he attempts to unravel the mystery hidden with the dreams of Tipu. Karnad writes about his focus while sketching the character in the play: 'As for the irony, Tipu is too tragic a figure to allow any ironic dimensions to his characterization. Yet I have tried to explore his vulnerabilities through his dreams. There were such fascinating sides to his characters- he was a great lover of science and tried to inculcate that love in his sons.' [30]

The play dramatizes Tipu's dreams and Tipu's own interpretations with corresponding historical incidents to show the character's conscious, subconscious thoughts, memories and feelings. Karnad has employed a unique dramaturgy in this play because it was written as a Radio play. Grace Sudhir comments on the dramaturgy of the play,

> Girish Karnad deploys a unique dramatic technique in ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan,*** perhaps keeping in mind the requirements of a radio play, since that was how the play was initially conceived. While one aspect of the mind strives to grasp a dream emerging from the depths of the unconscious and struggles to concretize it for explicit analysis, another aspect grapples with deliberate action of the external realm; and yet another attempts to ratiocinate over the two. [31]

The multi dimensional engagement in the play allows for 'complex seeing'. Karnad's heroic mode of expression in this play is a departure from the other two historical plays in

which he has employed both heroic as well as ironic modes to revise the perceptions about the past.

The colonizers's wish to capture every state in India and remain as rulers is based on their perception that Indians are still barbarians to be civilized. The play revises this notion through the character of Tipu. Tipu unlike majority of the Kings in India never compromised with British. His resistance all through his seventeen years of reign, though ended in death, 'reveals the fact … India as an undiscovered, primitive land mass inhabited by uncivilized barbarians waiting to be colonized was totally erroneous'[32] In spite of Tipu's uncompromising fight till the end he was crushed by the British. Tipu realized the wicked British designs, and therefore remained firm to fight back alone, unsupported, uncompromising. It is really unfortunate that Tipu died owing to the betrayal of his own people. The relentless and pro-development reign of Tipu was the cause for the British jealousy against him. Prof. B. Sheik Ali describes Tipu's patriotic feelings, determination and courage:

> His life passion was to liberate the land from the foreign yoke, for which purpose he used all his means, energy, strength and power, not sparing even his life. He never compromised his ideals, never deviated from his goal and never submitted himself to the authority of any foreign power. Even in his dreams he remained fully engaged in a life and death struggle against his foreign foes. [33]

Karnad makes use of the available sources such as archives of historical accounts, memoirs, letters, ballads, rural plays and more particularly the notebook of dreams in ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan,*** like the sources he used for his first historical play Tughlaq although he titled the play as ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan***. Tipu's Notebook of dreams served Karnad the basic material to build a new perspective to re-view and understand the unique and legendary personality of Tipu Sultan and the period of Indian history in which

he played a significant part. As the play progresses the scenes such as the ramparts of Srirangapatna on the night of the fourth of may 1799, the Maratha court in Pune where Charles Malet provokes the Maratha Nana against Tipu, the first scene in act two on 23rd February 1792 in front of the big mosque in Srirangapatna where Tipu discusses the conditions laid down by the English with his courtiers, generals and senior citizens, Tipu's resolve to sleep on the floor when his sons are in the foreign hands, Tipu's meeting with Haripanth Phadke, the scene at Calcutta in 1798 where Richard Wellesly is talking with his younger brother Arthur Wellesley and Colonel William Kirkpatrick are corresponding with the historical facts. These facts are intertwined with Tipu's five dreams in the play. A brief analysis of the plot of the play would be helpful to understand the way the dreams and real incidents are interwoven in Karnad's articulation of the historical narratives.

The play begins in the house of Kirmani, a historian in the city of Mysore in 1803 four years after the death of Tipu with the entry of Colonel Colin Mackenzie, an oriental scholar. The dialogue between Kirmani and Mackenzie in the beginning reveals about the differences between these two historians as they represent two different nations. Kirmani, who lived as a court historian during Hyder Ali and Tipu's rule is writing history for the British. He has problems regarding credibility and objectivity. But Mackenzie as a part of British doesn't have any such problem and he speaks authoritatively. Kirmani seems to have hesitation to speak about his culture

> Kirmani: There's no healing. True, the blood and the tears dried up a long time ago. But the wound remains fresh.
>
> Mackenzie: That's understandable, I mean, you were close to him. But you are also a historian. You need to develop certain objectivity.
>
> Kirmani: Yes, that's what you keep telling me, Mackenzie Sahib, Objectivity. Dispassionate distance. Is that possible?

Mackenzie: Essential, I'd say. A must …

….

Mackenzie: I am interested in the other side. You could say that's how we Europeans are brought up … to be interested in the other side as well. That I suppose is our strength.

Kirmani: I find a lifetime insufficient to understand my own. Besides I spent my life serving him and his father. And now I work for you, his enemies. What does that make me? A traitor? Am I trust worthy anymore? Doesn't that worry you? It worries me.

Mackenzie: Our loyalty is to history Kirmaniji. Keep emotion out. Stick to the facts. (***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan,*** 181, 182)[34]

The above dialogue shows the differences in their approaches. Kirmani is hurt about writing history. Karnad, perhaps, is trying to say that Tipu's life conviction and tragedy together constitute too large a subject to easily fit into the pages of history or to his play. Kirmani considers the dreams of Tipu are sacred and all important where as for Mackenzie they are unimportant.

…, wiped away every word written in ink. Within a night, all my recorded facts became memory.

Mackenzie: Pity!

Kirmani: Nature did with that dream what Munshi Habibullah should have done with the rest.

Mackenzie: What do you mean?

Kirmani: Muushi Habibullah was a fool. He should have destroyed the diary, when he found it.

Mackenzie: There was no harm in it.

> Kirmani: It who a diary in which my master had recorded his dreams. He had kept it concealed from his closest confidants. I didn't know of its existence. None of us did. I couldn't on its first page, in the Sultan's own hand. (*DTS*, 191)

Kirmani says that Tipu's 'embassy to Mauritius – the Malarctic adventure' never happened when Mackenzie insisted him to write about it. But later in the play Tipu himself talks about it and sends his embassy to Mauritius. As Kirmani avoided writing about Tipu's last day, Mackenzie tells him to write about it. As they discuss the last day of Tipu, the scene is suddenly shifted to the ramparts of the Srirangapatna fort. It was the night of the fourth of May 1799. The soldiers search for the dead body of Tipu to ensure that he is dead. At the order of Wellesley, Nadeem Khan recognizes Tipu's body. A soldier vandalizes the body by cutting the whisker of dead Tipu. This scene is followed by the continuation of the first scene where in Mackenzie and Kirmani talk about the Malaractic deal. This scene ends with Mackenzie's comment to Kirmani 'Janaab Hussain Ali Kirmani Sahib. I am interested in the people who spoke to him and the ones he spoke to you. Keep the dreams to yourself.' (*DTS*, 192) From this scene onwards Kirmani and Mackenzie act as choric characters, commenting on the action. The next two scenes show Tipu's dreams. In the first dream Tipu is seen returning after an elephant Shikar with his Finance Minister Poornaiya. They come across a big ruined temple. Inside it there are several human images of which two are women. When Tipu asks them about their identity, they say that they are living women seeking salvation through prayers for centuries. Immediately, he tells Poornaiya. 'We'll have the temple repaired, the walls rebuilt so that these seekers after God are not disturbed.' (*DTS*, 191) The next dream takes place soon after Tipu and Poornaiya leave the temple. Two old men with two elephants and several footmen carrying spears and guns meet Tipu. They tell him that they are envoys of the Emperor of China who has sent a white elephant and the horses to

Tipu as presents. They also inform Tipu that the Emperor never sent these gifts to anyone except him and Alexander the Great. The first dream shows Tipu's concern for the dilapidated temple and his respect for worship. Tipu's generosity to renovate the temple speaks of his secular outlook that he had towards Hindus. He had generously given presents to the Hindu priests, lands to temples and maintained religions tolerance throughout his life. It is further proved by the fact that in 1916, the director of the Department of Archaeology in Mysore discovered in the temple of Sringeri twenty nine letters that are related to Tipu. R. Narasimhacharya's study of these letters reveals that Tipu was the well-wisher of Sringeri Temple. [35]

The second dream shows Tipu's unconscious mind striving to become like Alexander: 'My interpretation of the dream is that God Almighty and our Prophet will make me another Alexander ….' (*DTS*, 194) The scene doesn't grow here to be ironical about Tipu's dream. The two dreams are followed by a real conference at Diwan-i-Khas where Tipu, Mir Sadiq and Poornaiya are seen. Tipu discusses the revision of the state commercial policy and the delegation to be sent to France. Tipu feels that the commercial activities should be under state control. His farsighted vision about the welfare of his Kingdom is revealed in the following words:

> Then they'd better like it. And both of you too! We need glass. We need guns. We need cannons. Shall we keep buying them from abroad? Even for that we need money. And shall we be content with the pittance we get by taxing our businessmen when we have ivory and sandalwood freely available? Can an individual trader deal in sandalwood? For centuries we begged and borrowed silk from the Chinese. And everyone predicted disaster when I got a few eggs from China. And now we have a flourishing industry of our own. Shall we sit back like the stupid Nizam and the

> Marathas who continue as though the English never existed – indeed as though the Europeans never existed?... (*DTS*, 195, 196)

While planning for the delegation, Tipu calls his sons and asks them to pay attention to his talks with Osman Khan and Ghulam Ali Khan. The scene shows Tipu as a shrewd administrator, a person with progressive thoughts and a true soldier. He knows the danger from Lord Cornwallis and therefore his apprehension over his appointment. Tipu thinks that Cornwallis after his defeat in America from Washington might think of getting his stain off his reputation by vanquishing him. Tipu's words, 'His appointment is as sure a pointer as the conjunction of Saturn and Mars in the third sector of Aries. We'll soon have the shadow of the English falling across our doorstep' (*DTS*, 202) reveal his anxiety. As Tipu knew that the British's would expand their colony all over India in a planned manner, he equally planned and resisted the British. 'The vast bulk of correspondence with the French Republic, General Malarctic and even Napoleon reveals Tipu's efforts' to form an international front to protect the sovereignty of individual nations.' [36] According to Grace Sudhir, 'to befriend and seek the assistance of the French in order to root out the British from India was his passionate vision that would be on his terms, without compromising in any way his leadership and independence.' [37]

In the next scene Tipu is lost in another dream in which he confronts a Young man who directly enters his chamber. But this bold Youngman is a woman. Tipu interprets the woman's trick to gain Tipu's attention like this: 'I interpret this dream in the following fashion. May it please God, though these Marathas are dressed in male attire, they will in fact prove to be women?'(*DTS,* 204) G.S. Amur, a renowned critic interprets this as an evidence for wish fulfillment.' [38] This scene is followed by a scene at the Maratha court where Charles Malet, the representative of Lord Cornwallis successfully turns Maratha Nana against Tipu.

Then the scene shifts to the inner chamber of Tipu's palace. Tipu is sitting beside his wife Ruqayya who has fallen ill. She is still concerned about matters of the state. Tipu explains to her why the British hate him –

> But let me tell you, I've had two teachers in my life. My father, who taught me war, and the English, who taught me trade. They taught me that the era of the camel is over, that it is now the age of the sailing ship. And they dislike me for being so adept a pupil? (*DTS*, 209)

Tipu's love for his state is revealed in his words – ' This land is ours and it's rich, overflowing with goods the world hungers for, and we let foreigners come in and rob us of our wealth !.... ' (*DTS*, 210) At this moment Hasina enters and informs that the Vakils have returned from Pune and the Marathas have declared war on Tipu. Ruqayya is shocked terribly by this. Mackenzie and Kirmani comment that Lord Cornwallis invaded Mysore with parallel attacks of the Nizam and the Marathas. At last together they attack Srirangapatna. Tipu was forced to make compromise with English. The long first scene of act two takes place on 23rd February 1792 in front of the big mosque in Srirangapatna. Tipu addresses the courtiers, senior citizens and generals regarding the conditions of peace dictated by Lord Cornwallis. The four conditions are – 1. All English prisoners who had been jailed by the King of Mysore are to be released; 2. Tipu should leave half the domain of his Kingdom to the British; 3. Tipu should pay an indemnity of six Crores to the British; 4. Tipu should deliver two of his sons to the English as hostages of war. However much humiliating these terms are, Tipu agrees to fulfill them in spite of the citizens' request not to agree. Tipu is not worried about the safety of his sons but fears that the English will teach them their language that would alienate them. Tipu's fear of colonialism is expressed thus:

> The danger is: they'll teach my children their language, English. The language in which it is possible to think of children as hostages. All I can

> try to do is agree to their conditions and conclude the treaty in a hurry before my children have learnt to think in those terms. (*DTS*, 217)

As the meeting ends here, Tipu tells Mir Sadik to arrange a splendid procession for his sons with a wish to put the English into shame.

The next scene takes place in Tipu's bed chamber where he sees a terrible dream. In this dream he sees his father Hyder Ali abusing him for maiming him by sending the grandsons as hostages and letting Cornwallis escape after he was defeated. Having expressed his apprehensions about his own people, Tipu says why the British conquer the land. He promises Hyder that he would not let them to continue:

> But the English fight for something called England. What is it? It's not a religion that sustains them, nor a land that feeds them. They wouldn't be here if it did. It's just a dream, for which they are willing to kill and die. Children of England, they have conquered our land, plundered its riches. And now they've started taking away our children. Mine- I will not let them. Father I'll restore your limbs... (*DTS*, 226)

The next scene takes place at the Maratha camp. Tipu cautions Haripant Phadke against the English who will take his children next time. Mackenzie and Kirmani comment that Cornwallis defeated Tipu and won the title 'Marquee's'. Later Tipu's sons were also restored. Seven years piece ensued. Lord Cornwallis was succeeded by Sir John Shore as the Governor General. The next action takes place at Calcutta where Richard Wellesley is talking to his brother Arthur Wellesley about the attack on Tipu. Wellesly hates Tipu when he is growing stronger following the British trade model. He is determined to destroy Tipu in six months. The next scene is shifted to Diwan-i-Khas. In this last scene Tipu tells the noblemen about the new demands of the British. He is aware that he is helpless and there is no other alternative except fighting against British. He trusts his noblemen about their support. He gets support from the seer at Śringeri. He sees

that he is surrounded by his officers who bring news of victory. Mir Sadiq brings the news that Nizam has realized his folly in backing the British. Marathas have extended their support to him. Qamaruddin reports that the English are withdrawing. Tipu is happy and wishes to celebrate this victory. But in fact, according to Kirmani, this was Tipu's last dream. He tells that the battle of Srirangapatna was lost. Tipu was killed in the battle. This dream suggests the dawn of a new era. Ironically this dream is the most tragic of all dreams because what actually happened was opposite. Karnad mixes the dream with the horror of Tiipu's tragic end. Kirmani at the end of the play in postscript tells about the descendants of Tipu – ' when India became independent in 1947, the families of Maharajas who had bowed and scraped before the British masters were granted sumptuous privy purses by the Government of India which the decedents … of Tipu Sultan were left to rot in the slums of Calcutta.'(*DTS*, 239) This post script reveals how the family of a great ruler who had fought against British was treated after the battle at Srirangapatana and after India's independence. Karnad shows Tipu as a determined King who always wished to drive the British away from his land as he viewed them of their culture and language with suspicion. When his sons were given to British as ransom his only worry was that they would be taught of English and British culture. He expresses his anxiety in the following manner:

> This is the new language that has come into our land: English. This is the culture of that language: English. Boys of seven and eight as hostages of war.
>
> …
>
> The danger is: they'll teach my children their language, English. The language in which it is possible to think of children as hostages. All I can try to do is agree to their conditions and conclude the treaty in a hurry- before my children have learnt to thonk in those terms. (*DTS*, 216, 217)

The above words speak of the threat of British to India. Tipu is intelligent enough to grasp the danger of British in their invasion. In the 12th century, in spite the resistance of the Indians, over the years Islam established itself in India and its culture became a part of Indian culture. The Muslim rulers who settled in India later fought against the British. Tipu is one such ruler who opposed the increasing use of English and culture. The play highlights two conspicuous aspects of Tipu's character which are evident in his dreams. They are 'the first, an extraordinarily high sense of accountability and honesty to his duty as a King and the second, the absolute fearlessness he displayed throughout his life' [39]

Karnad through the story of Tipu has explored both the mental and physical capabilities of the character of a great Sultan who met his end as per his own predictions – 'It was not Tipu's dreams but his predictions that came true.'(*DTS*, 239) Some of the critics of Karnad question this play as it doesn't depict the 'true history' of Sultan. But as it was not written to show history, it is viewed as a literary text in which Karnad has successfully articulated his thoughts about Sultan to explore further the colonial colours of English by rendering the dreams into a wonderful humanistic text.

The play retrieves the unfamiliar side of Tipu (psychological side) through his dreams that has been marginalized by the English and oriental historians to revise the audience's perception about the historical narratives. ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*** is Karnad's third historical play. The echos of the earlier historical plays are heard in this play. Grace Sudhir points out, 'Tipu is a visionary like Tughlaq and his emancipatory visions, like those of Basvanna, are trampled by the selfish greed of the lesser being surrounding him. It is a significant feature of Karnad's dramaturgy, however, that each historical figure is treated within different parameters. His portraiture of Tipu has sincerity where as Tughlaq and Basavann's had irony'[40]

Tughlaq, ***Tale-Danda*** and ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*** are Karnad's historical plays written in 1964, 1990 and 1997 respectively. Though the gap between *Tughlaq* and

Tale-Danda is more than twenty five years both the plays deal with history ironically. These plays, in fact, are the converging points at which the past and the present meet. The plays explore both the past as well as present political conflicts and therefore they prove that history is the contemporary reflection of the past narratives. About *Tughlaq*'s relevance Karnad explains in this manner:

> The play certainly reflects the disillusionment that my generation felt with the new politics of independent India, the real politick, the cynicism, and the gradual erosion of ethical norms. It is one of my more successful plays. It is produced all the time. Different generations seem to find in it some understanding of their political-social conditions. [41]

Though Karnad returned to history for ***Tale-Danda*** after 25 years, he makes a similar focus. He says,

> When I returned from the USA, India was in turmoil over the Mandal – Mandir issues. The society was being polarized and the country was moving in dangerous directions. *Tale-Danda* is a solid issue – oriented 'literary' text that tries to address issues of religious belief that create social and political crises. Where as, *Tughlaq* was obliquely political, this was straight forwardly so. I wanted to present the consequences of religious fanaticism and highlight the futility of such attitudes in the face of people's aspirations for happiness, peace and prosperity.[42]

Unlike ***Tughlaq***, and ***Tale-Danda***, ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*** discusses the Indian perceptions about history. Karnad as a Cultural Nationalist rejects the orietalists' history and perceives the historical personality through the recorded dreams of Tipu. Karnad writes,

> What I find fascinating is the fact that Tipu Sultan, who practically spent forty nine years of his life on horse back, recorded his dreams and kept

> them under his pillow. I wonder whether those dreams dictated his actions. It is of course greater marvel that the note book survived the ravages of time. This was a historical curiosity I thought that had to be highlighted. In the play, I used Tipu Sultan's own interpretations of his dreams. As for the irony, Tipu is too tragic a figure to allow any ironic dimension to his characterization…History has treated him unfairly. But most of our received history was written by the British. [43]

Karnad has sketched Tipu as a great patriot. The force behind such perception is that Tipu's enemies were English unlike the Indian enemies to Tughlaq and Basavanna. Karnad perhaps quite unconsciously employed 'heroic' mode while treating Tipu. But he is not only critical but also ironical while sketching Tughlaq and Basavanna as he viewed them from the point of views of their Indian enemies.

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Notes

[1] R.K. Dhawan, 'Girish Karnad: The Man and the Writer' ***Plays of Girish Karnad Critical Perspectives,*** Ed. Jayadipsingh Dodiya (New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1999) 13, 14.

[2] Gunjan Chaturvedi, 'Turning History into Relevant Drama: Contemporaneity in Girish Karnad's History Plays' ***Post Independence Indian Writing in English,*** Ed. Anjubala Agrawal (Delhi: Authors Press, 2008)138.

[3] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 35.

[4] Quoted by CN Ramachandran, ***Girish Karnad Mattu Avara Mooru Charithrika Natakagalu*** (Bangalore: Sapna Books House, 2008)6.

[5] Romila Thapar, ***A History of India, Vol- 1.*** (Penguin Books, 1990) 264.

[6] CN Ramachandran, ***Girish Karnad Mattu Avara Mooru Charithrika Natakagalu*** (Bangalore: Sapna Books House, 2008)49, 50.

[7] Aparna Dharwadkar, 'Historical Fictions and Post-colonial Representation: Reading ***Tughlaq' Girish Karnad's Plays*** Ed. Tutun Mukharjee 99,100.

[8] Dharwadkar, 'Historical Fictions …' 98.

[9] Basavaraj S. Naikar, '***Tughlaq*** as an Interpreter' ***Girish Karnad's Plays*** Ed. Tutun Mukharjee 88.

[10] Karnad, '***Tughlaq' Collected plays Vol. One*** (NewDelhi: OUP, 2005) 53 (Subsequent references to this work are shown in the text itslf).

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[12] Karnad, Appendix-1 ***Collected plays Vol One,*** 307

[13] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 36.

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[15] U.R. Anantha Murthy, 'Introduction' ***Three plays*** **Girish** ***Karnad*** (New Delhi: OUP, 1994) 144,145.

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[17] M.R. Verma, 'Girish Karnad's ***Tale Danda*** Presentness of Past' ***Thunder on Stage: A Study of Girish Karnad's Plays,*** Ed. C.L. Khatri, Sudhir K. Arora (Jaipur: Book Enclave, 2008) 175.

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[21] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 45.

[22] Karnad 'Introduction' ***Three Plays*** 1.

[23]Rupaali Burke, 'India then and now, The contemporary Relevance of Girish Karnad's ***Tale-Danda' Studies in Indian Drama in English*** Ed. Saryug Yadav, Amarnath Prasad (Barailly: Prakash Book Depot, 2003) 108

[24] Dharwadkar, 'Introduction', ***Collected plays Vol Two,*** xxxiv, xxv.

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[27] Gunjan Chaturvedi, 'Turning History Into Relevant Drama; Contemporaneity in Girish Karnad's Historical Plays' ***Post Independent Indian writing in English,*** Ed. Anju Bala Agrawal (Delhi: Authors press, 2008) 133.

[28] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 48.

[29] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 48.

[30] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 49.

[31] Grace Sudhir, 'On the wings of his Drama: Reviewing the legend and History of Tipu Sultan' ***Girish Karnad's Plays*** Ed. Tutun Mukharjee 308.

[32] Sudhir, 'On the wings of his Drama…' 309.

[33] Prof. B. Sheik Ali, 'Reforming zeal of Tipu Sultan' ***Tipu Sultan a Great Martyr***, Ed. Prof: B. Sheik Ali (Bangalore: Prasaranga Bangalore university, 1993) 33.

[34] Karnad, '***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan***' ***Collected plays Vol Two***181, 182. (Subsequent references to this work are shown in the text itslf).

[35] Y. Umanath Shenoy, 'Tipu Sultan Hindu Dwashiye?' ***Taranga*** (weekly) 21st May 1989. 25, 27, 29.

[36] Grace Sudhir, 'Re-Viewing the Legend and History of Tipu Sultan' ***Girish Karnad's Plays*** Ed. Tutun Mukharjee, 312.

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[38] G.S.Amura. ***Girish Karnad Hagu Bharathiya Rangabhoomi*** (Dharawada: Manohara Grantamale, 2008) 134.

[39] Sudhir, 'Re-Viewing the Legend …' 310.

[40] Sudhir, 'Re-Viewing the Legend …' 317.

[41] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 36.

[42] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 44, 45.

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Chapter-Three

Myths Humanized: Karnad's Mythological Plays

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Myths Humanized: Karnad's Mythological plays

The Indian playwrights show an indispensable relation with the Indian past by employing the myths and legends such as ***Ramayana***, ***Mahabharata***, and the folktales in their plays. The reason is that the myth has played a significant role in human psychology and society from the past as a religious narrative to its recent adaptation as an aid in the exploration of the unconscious mind.[1] Like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, T.P. Kailasam, Chandrashekar Kambar, Girish Karnad has handled myths in his plays such as ***Yayati***, ***Ma Nisshada***, ***Hittina Hunja*** and ***The Fire and The Rain***. According to Karnad, the reason for his handling of myths and legends is to 'tell a particular story effectively'. Karnad's achievement through the handling of the myths and legends is significant because he has used them as tools to interpret the contemporary realities. It is proper to analyze Karnad's mythical plays to understand why Karnad has turned to mythical sources and how he has used them in for his plays. The critical study of all the mythical plays of Karnad has been undertaken here to explore whether the mythical stories or episodes or characters are metaphors to interpret the present reality or they are used as a broad outlines to build contemporary plots for his plays. The detailed interpretation of all the four plays of Karnad has been undertaken here under.

Yayati

Yayati is Karnad's first play. The play was written during Karnad's preparation to go on a Rhodes scholarship to England. It was during this period he found himself in the family apprehensions about his departure and the possible implications. Karnad describes the situation in the following words:

> It is difficult to describe to a modern Indian audience the traumas created by this event. Going abroad was a much rarer occurrence in those days;

> besides, I came from a large, close - knit family, and was the first member of the family ever to go abroad. My parents were worried lest I decide to settle down outside India, and even for me, though there was no need for an immediate decision, the terrible choice was implicit in the very act of going away. Should I at the end of my studies return home for the sake of my family, my people, and my country, even at the risk of my abilities and training not being fully utilized in what seemed a stifling, claustrophobic atmosphere, or should I rise above such parochial considerations and go where the world drew me?(*Yayati*, 73)[2]

While writing the play, Karnad saw it as an escape from his stressful situation. But looking back after several years he is amazed at how precisely the myth reflected his anxieties at that moment, his resentment with all those who seemed to demand that he sacrifices his future. (*Ya*, 74)

The story of the play is drawn from the epic ***Mahabharata.*** The story in the epic runs as follows: King Yayati is the tenth in the Brahma's family. The predecessors of Yayati are Nahusha, Aayu, Pururava, Ilanammi Kanya, Manu, Surya, Aditi, Daksha and Brahma. Yayati married Devayani, the daughter of the sage Shukracharya. Devayani had a friend by name Sharmistha, daughter of Vrishaparva, the King of Asuras. Once hurt by the remarks made by Devayani, Sharmistha pushed her friend into a well. While passing by the well Yayati heard the cries of Devayani and rescued her from the well by hand. Devayani fell in love with the King and offered herself to marry him. But Yayati was unable to accept the proposal as he was a Kshathriya and Devayani a Brahmin. However, the marriage took place as Shukracharya consented to this. As a punishment Sharmistha was made Devayani's servant. The marriage brought two sons from Devayani - Yadu and Turvas. The clandestine relation with Sharmistha brought three sons–Druhya, Anu and Puru. Yayati's clandestine relationship with Sharmistha infuriates Devayani. She in her

seething anger and jealousy goaded her father to bring a curse of old age and decrepitude upon her husband. But in the curse there was a clause to escape from it. If Yayati found some one else to bear the curse on his behalf, then he would enjoy the ever lasting youth. Yayati promptly asked his people and his children. No one agreed except Puru. The youngest son of Sharmistha, Puru willingly offered his youth in filial devotion. Yayati accepted Puru's offer. Yayati remained young while his son turned into a weak and senile man. Yayati forsook his life of sensual delights only after indulging in it for a thousand years. He returned his youth to Puru and took back his old age and went to the forest.

Karnad uses the above mythical story for his play. He gives a dramatic structure by weaving the incidents of the myth into a complex plot. To this mythical story of Yayati, Karnad adds new characters and incidents 'to deepen the connotative richness of his drama and give it a contemporary appeal.'[3] Yayati in the play is already married to Devayani and in the course of the gradual unfolding of the events he accepts Sharmistha, gets the curse of Shukracharya, escapes from the curse with the help of his son and returns the youth to Pooru (Karnad spelt the name as Pooru). The epic story has been compressed and the action takes place in one night. Karnad creates new characters like Pooru's wife Chitralekha and the maid confidante Swarnalata to explore new meanings and give a different interpretation to the myth.

The play is divided into four acts with the Sutradhara's introduction about the play in the beginning. The Sutradhara introduces himself first and then says that the play deals with an ancient myth. However, he clarifies that the play is not mythological because it doesn't aim to plunge the audience into the sentiment of devotion. It doesn't set out to prove that the sole reason for our suffering in this world is that we have forsaken our gods. It doesn't aim to advise the audience to surrender to god by crushing the egos for the divine grace and redemption. The play has no gods and it deals with death. However it is an ancient story. Sutradhara gives reasons to justify the play. He says, 'we turn to

ancient lore not because it offers any blinding revelation or hope of consolation, but because it provides fleeting glimpses of the fears and desires sleepless with in us. It is a good way to get introduced to ourselves.' (*Ya*, 6)

As the play opens Devayani and Swarnalata are seen in the room talking about Sharmistha. Swarnalata is complaining to Devayani against Sharmistha. Swarnalata is angry and very much disturbed about the behaviour of Sharmistha. Devayani too is not happy about Sharmistha. Their dialogue reveals the on-going conflict between Devayani and Sharmistha. Sharmistha doesn't have proper respect for her mistress because she is aware that Yayati married Devayani not because he loved her but because she was the daughter of Shukracharya who could bless him with immortality. Sharmistha says, 'Except that he is not lusting for you, you poor darling, he lusts for immortality. Your father's art of 'Sanjeevani'. (*Ya,* 11) She is jealous of Devayani's position as Yayati's wife. Her jealousy is revealed in these words:

> I opened my eyes. You had become the Queen of the Arya race, wife of King Yayati. I was your slave. My eyes have no lids now. I live staring at you, unflinchingly. Like the fish. No, like the gods, No, more a corpse, its eyes wide open. As the King crawls into your bed night after night, I want you to you to remember I am there hovering around… (*Ya*, 10)

Devayani tries to explain how she got married to Yayati. She has spoken just two sentences and those fourteen words influenced Yayati to marry her. But Sharmistha reacts sarcastically. She says,

> Very nice. Actually, I was discussing that story with one of the palace concubines the other day. And you know what she said? 'The King was no doubt in a hurry to have some quick fun and go', she said. 'Even with prostitutes picked off the street the first thing a man does is ask her name' And you say with you, the King dispensed with even that formality? You

> knew what would happen if you didn't act quickly. I mean, you didn't want the Kacha experience again! So, while he was locked in your embrace, you quickly told him you were Devayani, daughter of etcetera etcetera. (*Ya*, 13)

Devayani, unable to bear Sharmistha's sarcasm asks Yayati why he married her. He says that because she is the most beautiful woman he knew and at that moment she was an apparition of the kind he had never seen before: dirty, disheveled, ravishing and fortunately, he had pulled her up by her right hand. He was enchanted by her and she was not exactly disinclined. So he married her. (*Ya*, 14) Yayati's reply doesn't convince her. Yayati knows that Sharmistha is torturing both Devayani and him. He accuses Sharmistha for pushing Devayani into well. But Sharmistha's arguments about how she treated Devayani after she heard the remark made by the latter defeat Yayati. He feels confused and helpless. Sharmistha in her helpless state prepares herself to drink poison and commit suicide. But Yayati prevents her by holding her right hand, a gesture to marry her. Yayati's contempt against Sharmistha disappears. He decides to make her his Queen. In fact, this is Sharmistha's plot to win Yayati and she succeeds in it. But Yayati's position is in fact weakened due to this development. The crisis in the life of Yayati is precipitated by his refusal to part from Sharmistha. Unable to bear Devayani any more, she bluntly tells her to leave the palace at once. But Yayati doesn't agree to this. He calmly tells Devayani,

> …Because I feel bewitched by her. Even now, at this moment, I want her. I have never felt so entranced by a woman. What is it? Is it some spell she has cast? Some secret sorcery? I can feel youth bursting out within me again, her beauty, her intelligence, her wit, her abandon in love. Not to marry her is to lose her, don't you see? I must have her. I have to keep her with me. Please try to understand. (*Ya*, 30)

Yayati's wish to keep Sharmistha as his Queen intensifies the crisis. In fact, both Yayati and Devayani are responsible for Sharmistha's stay in the palace. Devayani got her as her servant a life long punishment for Sharmistha for ill-treating her. Neither Yayati nor Devayani admit that they are responsible for the curse of premature old age on Yayati. When Yayati learns that Devayani's father Shukracharya has cursed him with old age, he doesn't admit what he has done, instead accuses Sharmistha -'Old age! Decrepitude! By nightfall! And then! Then what Sharmistha! You she - devil! You are the cause for all this, you are responsible. You trapped me with your wiles' (*Ya*, 42) Yayati is demoralized and restless by the curse. He doesn't believe that his son Pooru would be of any help in saving him from the curse. He loses his control over him and feels desperate. He says, 'Patience? Patience of a man falling into a bottomless pit! Patience? The deafening rush of emptiness! What can be more terrible than that? And suppose Pooru fails? Suppose that shriveled mendicant refuses to listen to reason?' (*Ya*, 42, 43). He doesn't accept the advice of Sharmistha to accept the curse and go to the forest because of his desire to live young. Yayati says,

> No, no, you cannot possibly imagine the horror of it. You will always be an outsider to my anguish, to my grief, to my nightmare. You can only watch. With such care, with such pride, I had gathered the rarest moments of my life in my palm like precious stones. So I could play with them, relieve them, juggle them. And suddenly they explore each moment hurting through my muscle and bones like a meteorite… Solitude? What are you talking about? I don't want solitude. I can't bear it. I want people around me. Queens, ministers, armies, enemies, the populace, I love them all. Solitude? The very thought is repulsive. If I have to know myself, Sharmistha I have to be young. I must have my youth. (*Ya*, 43)

He grows violent and mad. Sitting on his bed he recollects the glorious days of the past: 'I am trying to recapture my youth. Moments when I handed out pain, moments when slaughtered enemies, razed hostile cities to the ground, made my queens writhe in pain and demanded that they laugh and make love to me in gratitude. Why do I think of those moments now, Sharmistha?' (*Ya*, 43) He even accuses Pooru saying that he must be celebrating his youth, his chance to rule the world. He also says Pooru has 'Rakshasa blood in his veins', and he cannot trust him. These remarks about Pooru are made in the presence of Sharmistha. In the play Pooru is not Sharmistha's son like in the myth, therefore Karnad makes Yayati speak a lot about Pooru in the presence of Sharmistha.

In act three Pooru returns from the Shambu Shrine where he had gone to meet Shukracharya with a message that his father's curse can be redeemed if somebody else accepts the old age. Yayati feels happy about it. But he doesn't realize his mistakes. In this jubilant mood, Yayati is not able to understand that nobody is ready to come forward and accept his old age. He believes that there are people to accept it. He thinks that there is no shortage of men who will come out to take over the burden. He is sure that his people will not hesitate to receive his old age. When Sharmistha asks him why anybody should accept the punishment meted out to him, Yayati gets angry and accuses her:

> You are out of your mind. You want me to spurn the hand Shukracharya has extended and crawl into the funeral pyre? You want me to be dependent on you, don't you? You trapped me once and you what me to stay trapped, clinging to you for survival. Woman, will you never give up your demonic machinations? Get out of my sight. (*Ya*, 46)

Yayati is terribly upset and frightened about the old age. He is deeply hurt that nobody is prepared to accept his old age. In spite of his offers such as riches, royalty, glory, fame, no one sees any temptation. They all want Yayati to accept the curse for himself. Even Pooru tells him what Sharmistha has suggested. Yayati is not ready for this

and cries before Pooru. At last Pooru decides to offer his youth to his father because of his feeling of unworthiness as a prince and this, he thinks an opportunity to fulfill his responsibility as a Chandravamsha prince. Sharmistha tries to dissuade him but Pooru is determined. He asks her not to shove him back with that name Chitralekha. It is not Pooru's filial devotion and compassion for his father led him to accept the curse – 'I want to root myself back in my family. I want to realize the vision that drove my ancestors….I am like an infant on the brink of birth. Please don't shove back with that name' (*Ya*, 50) Yayati thus gets Pooru to whom he transfers the curse. Analyzing the process of the exchange of decrepitude with the youth Seema Suneel comments,

> Thus Yayati succeeds in transferring his old age and his sins to Puru, but in the process he experiences shattering disillusionment and loss of faith. The argument that he puts forward is that his people need him as a King and therefore he is doing this. But to his own self, it is clear that this is not truth.[4]

The fourth act of the play is significant from the point of view of understanding the author's interpretation of the myth. The realization of the horror of the situation occurs to Yayati when he confronts Chitralekha. Chitralekha is stunned to know that her husband Pooru accepted his father's old age. But with courage she faces the situation –

> Cry? Why should I Cry? I should laugh. I should cheer… Except that I have been so unfair to him so cruelly unjust. I thought he was an ordinary man. What a fool I have been! How utterly blind! I am the chosen one and I…which other woman has been so blessed? Why should I shed tears? (*Ya*, 55, 56)

Even when she is alone to receive Pooru in her chamber she appreciates him of his greatness. She feels that she is privileged to be his wife. Not knowing fully the gravity of the situation, she is prepared to extend all her support to her husband to take up the

new responsibility. But she gets frightened terribly when she sees his face and realizes what exactly happened to him. It is a terrible shock to her and unable to bear the situation, she tells him to leave the room. She remains alone with Swarnalata in the chamber cursing her luck. Swarnalata describes her family life right from her childhood days till her husband left her because she thinks that her pain and sufferings would help Chitralekha to bear her misery. Yayati comes and tries to console and advice Chitralekha. When she refuses, Yayati exercises his authority. He tells, 'I hope you realize where you are. This is the palace of Bharata's. I can order you – not as your father-in-law, but as your ruler to take him in and you will have to obey. But I am not doing that.' (*Ya*, 62) No request, no advice, no authority makes her to accept the old Pooru. Yayati even reminds the vow she took at the time of marriage. Yayati gets annoyed by her ironic reference to 'funeral pyre' and scolds her. She abuses him for being the cause of her misery: 'I did not push him to the edge of the pyre, sir you did. You hold forth on my wifely duties. What about your duty to your son? Did you think twice before foisting your troubles on a pliant son?' (*Ya,* 62) Thus Chitralekha's arguments defeat Yayati. He loses his moral power and integrity before her arguments. Chitralekha puts a challenge before Yayati-'I did not know prince Pooru when I married him. I married him for his youth, for his potential to plant the seed of the Bharata's in my womb. He has lost that potency now. He doesn't possess any of the qualities for which I married him. But you do.' (*Ya*, 65) Now she tells him to accept her as his wife, 'You have taken over your son's youth. It follows that you should accept everything that comes attached to it'. (*Ya*, 66) Yayati in his helplessness accuses her for such thoughts. She is in a miserable condition as Yayati neither returns Pooru's youth nor he accepts her. She finds only one alternative to this problem that is death. She consumes poison and dies. The death of Chitralekha opens Yayati's eyes. He repents for her death. Sharmistha accuses Yayati because of him a woman is dead,

another has gone mad, and a third one in danger of her life. Yayati's late realization springs from Chitralekha's tragic death. He speaks for himself:

> I thought there were two options – life and death. No, it is living and dying we have to choose between. And you have shown me that dying can go on for all eternity. Suddenly, I see myself, my animal body frozen in youth, decaying, deliquescing, and turning rancid. You are lieing on your pyre, child, burning for life, which I sink slowly in this quagmire, my body wrinkleless and grasping, but unable to grasp anything. (*Ya*, 68)

Yayati returns the youth to Pooru and prepares himself to face his destiny in the wilds with Sharmistha. In this exchange between youth and old age and the death of Chitralekha, Pooru should have been affected but on the contrary he fails to understand the gravity of the situation. He regains his youth, and repents, of course, for the death of Chitralekha. 'We brought you here only to die. But our senses are blighted and we shall never grasp the meaning of all that you taught us. What does all this mean O god? What does it mean?'(*Ya*, 69)

Karnad through Pooru and Chitralekha raises questions against the system of values evolved from myths. Pooru, the protagonist in the play, after his Swayamvara, comes to the palace with his wife Chitralekha. Pooru is meditative and passive, yet he has won Chitralekha not for his princely qualities but he is the son of Yayati. Kurtakoti observes, 'the most interesting element is that Pooru's inwardness is not one of wisdom but is filled with a keen awareness of the futility and meaninglessness of the human glory.'[5] Pooru's acceptance of his father's old age is not a sacrifice. As he wants to root himself back in the family to realize the vision that has guided his ancestors, he accepts the old age of Yayati. Pooru is sick of the palace life, its pomp and glory. Pooru appears groping in the dark for the meaning of life. The passive and meditative Pooru evokes empathy for his innocence and naivety in the play. He is amazed to find the tragedy of

Chitralekha and asks god the meaning of all that happened. Pooru unlike in the Myth is married and gets his youth soon.

Chitralekha's character is Karnad's invention. It is through her that Yayati is challenged questioning the moral of the shifting of his old age on Pooru. The exchange has the meaning of self-sacrifice in the myth. But the same poses a problem in the play. The inverted heredity creates an ironical situation. The rational arguments of Chitralekha that Yayati should take her as his wife as he has taken the youth of her husband not only shock him, but also unnerve him about the new relations. This is another shift Karnad makes in the interpretation of the myth. Another most significant deviation is that Chitralekha dies of consumption of poison. Due to this Yayati decides to return the youth to Pooru immediately. Yayati's decision to return the youth makes the whole situation ironical. The value of self-sacrifice in exchange and the actions that follow appear meaningless and absurd. The archetypal mythical characters have been humanized in the play. All the characters including newly created characters breathe, act, and argue. Pooru, the protagonist of the play has a new image of man with greater cynicism and introspection. Karnad finds his own life in Pooru. He writes,

> If I am allowed to give a personal interpretation of Pooru I would like to discover my own state of mind in his character. I had secured Rhodes scholarship and I was to leave for England for higher studies. My parents were happy but they also had their anxieties. They began to put certain conditions-that I should return to India soon after my studies and then marry a girl from my own community etc. I did not like their meddling in my affairs; I thought that I was the master of my destiny. I resented and this resentment must have coloured some of Pooru's statements. Again it may be that the sensibility of the Sarswat people – the Sarswats are never a settled community-might have influenced Pooru's sense of insecurity. [6]

Karnad draws the reader's attention to gender, class and caste issues that are deeply rooted in the Indian society. The male domination is very much evident in the human relations sketched in the play. Karnad questions such social values. The polygamous practice is resisted. Yayati's wish to have Sharmistha as his Queen along with his wife Devayani is opposed. In fact, this resistance causes a lot of trouble to Yayati. Karnad shows Devayani's opposition to Yayati's willingness to marry Sharmistha. But Yayati has made his choice to love Sharmistha by marrying Devayani. His marriage with Devayani is intended to have an access to Shukracharya from whom he could learn the art of Sanjeevini, the secret of rejuvenating the dead. Sharmistha infuriates Devayani talking about Yayati's selfishness. But Yayati doesn't dispute it either. Sharmistha's position as a maid servant has this dimension. First it was a punishment meted out to her for ill-treating Devayani and second she accepted it as to protect herself from social and political pressures. Sharmistha is aware of the actual causes for the unjust and cruel treatment meted out to her. She thinks that the gender, caste and cultural discriminations governed her fate. Yayati, though accepts Sharmistha as his lover he is not ready to keep her in the palace. The same Yayati advises Chitralekha about the responsibilities and duties of a wife when she refuses to accept the transformed Prince Pooru as her husband. The discriminatory practices of the society become clear in Yayati's reply to Pooru's questions about his mother. He says that Pooru's mother was born among the Asuras and, therefore, he despised her. She had suffered much before her death. So, all the women in Yayati's treatment become victims. Due to his irresistible desire to remain young his son Pooru and daughter-in-law too become victims.

Like Chitralekha, Swarnalata is Karnad's another invention. She is Devayani's another servant and confidante maid. She reveals her past to Chitralekha. She was the only child to her parents. As her father was not rich enough to give her education he had arranged to feed a poor Brahmin teacher for teaching her reading and writing. This

arrangement continued for a few years. When Swarnalatha grew up, she was married to a suitable boy of her caste. Swarnalata's happy married life was short lived as Swarnalata's husband suspected her of her relation with the Brahmin teacher. Swarnalata's efforts to ease his mind were in vain. At last she revealed that the teacher had indeed violated her. When he learnt the truth, it was very hard for him to live with her. He went away and never returned. This story of Swarnalata depicts the patriarchal society with gender discrimination where a woman is expected to maintain her chastity.

Karnad focuses on class differences also in the play. In the beginning of the play there is suggestive note about the differences between Devayani and Sharmistha. Though they were best friends, they have contempt for each other now. The cause for their contempt is that they belong to two different classes. The class difference did not interfere for a long time in their relationship. But the class hatred comes to the fore while they were bathing in the lake. Devayani's remarks about their exchanged blouses enraged Sharmistha. 'You poor people, You poor people. You only to get into a piece of any attire, as you start fantasizing.' (*Ya*, 20) This hurt Sharmistha very much and since then they have been breeding rivalry. Devayani was pushed into the well and subsequently rescued by Yayati who married her. Devayani to avenge Sharmistha got her father to curse Sharmistha to be her servant. The whole episode reveals Devayani's wish to prove her superiority over Sharmistha.

The plot of the play becomes complex and expands to different dimensions. King Yayati is cursed with old age in the prime of his life for his moral transgression. The King in his miserable state obviously approaches his son for his youth in exchange for old age. Pooru accepts the old age. But, neither Yayati nor Pooru benefits in this exchange. Yadava Raju examines the whole episode of the play in these words , 'no knowledge, no self - realization is gained by anyone, what persists is only the senselessness of a punishment meted out to the King and the guilt of having forced the burden for a King

and father, Yayati is left to face the consequences of shirking the responsibility for his own actions.'[7] Thus the mythical story in the play is revised and given a wider dimension to reflect the problems and difficulties that the contemporary Indian society confronts. The myths with its characters are refined tools for Karnad to handle the contemporary life.

Karnad has given the old mythical story a new meaning and significance highly relevant to the contemporary life. The structure of the myth that Yayati involves worldly pleasures and at last renounces them is retained as a broad mythical outline to the plot of the play. Seema Suneel discusses the originality of Karnad in her essay 'Karnad's Yayati Reconsidered': 'Karnad's originality lies in working out the motivations behind Yayati's ultimate choice. In ***Mahabharata***, Yayati recognizes the nature of desire itself and realizes that fulfillment doesn't diminish or finish desire. In Karnad's play, however Yayati recognizes the horror of his own life and assumes his moral responsibility after a series of symbolic encounters.'[8] Karnad has employed the western form in this play. Karnad admits that he followed the western model for this play. He says, 'Strangely though, the form of the play was not influenced by mythological plays. It reflected the western playwrights that I read avidly – Anouilh, Sartre, O'Neill, and the Greeks.'[9] Karnad's approach to myth is governed by the 'persuasive philosophy' of existentialism (Karnad calls it) of that time. His attempt was to emphasize the acceptance of grief and anguish by his characters. Karnad explains that the Pooru's old age is a sudden transformation and not the eventuality of life. It brings no wisdom and no self-realization. It is a senseless punishment for an act he has not committed. He was also intrigued by the ideal that if Pooru had a wife, how would she react? So he introduced Chitralekha. Every character in the play tries to evade the consequences of their actions, except Sharmistha and Chithralekha.[10] Thus the modified myth in the play serves as a device to discuss and reveal the problems of human life.

Ma Nishada

Karnad wrote ***Ma Nishada*** as a radio play during the initial years of his dramatic career. It was published in 1964 in the Diwali special issue of Prajavani, Kannada daily. Later in the year 1986 it was published in the Anthology of Kannada One-Act Plays (*Ekanka Sangraha* edited by Sindhuvalli Anantha Moorthy). It was also published by Manohara Grantha Mala in ***Bimba Mattu Ithara Natakagalu*** (2004). Like in ***Yayati***, ***Bali: The sacrifice***, ***The Fire and The Rain***, Karnad reproduces meanings and makes revelations about the possibility of another reading of mythical narrative in ***Ma Nishada***. The short play is a re-interpretation of Seetha's tragedy (from ***Ramayana***) from the point of view of the Washer-man in the life resulting from the Seetha's banishment by Rama after he heard the bitter remarks made by the washer-man. The play had been given scant attention by the critics despite Karnad's wide popularity and numerous critical studies of his mature plays. It is in this context, the focused study of this play would be of much use to understand whether the play establishes Karnad as a dramatist with such unique approach to myths.

The source of this play is a significant episode in ***Ramayana*** in which the remarks of the Washer-man caused Rama to send Seetha away from Ayodhya. The play dramatizes the pangs and sorrows of this Washer-man who was responsible for Seetha's second banishment. Except the Washer-man and Bharata of ***Ramayana***, no other character appears in the play. The life of the Washer-man is very much affected and distressed by Rama's banishment of Seetha. The play begins with the Washer-man's meeting with a Saint who is in meditation in the wilds. Having heard about Seetha, the Washer-man is on his way to meet her at the 'ashrama'of Valmiki. Neither the sage nor the Washer-man knows the identity of each other. He learns from the sage that Rama and Seetha are united and presently Seetha is not in the 'ashrama'. Though he feels sad that Seetha is not in the 'ashrama', he rejoices the news and expresses his gratitude to God for

uniting her with Rama which meant his rescue from a great burden of accusations. When he is asked who he is he says he is the same Washer-man who caused Seetha's exile. The sage, who is Valmiki himself, realizes that the Washer-man is his own creation. But doesn't reveal his identity at this moment to the Washer-man, instead asks him to tell his story. The Washer-man narrates his story: He is Padmanabha, a Washer-man in Ayodhya. He lived a happy life with his wife and a donkey. But one day there started a quarrel between them about Rama. Padmanabha disliked Rama where as his wife a great devotee and used to worship him. Once, the Washer-man had returned home after washing clothes in a happy mood. He wished to go to a local fair with his wife for which he called his wife affectionately and told her his wish. But when she said she would finish her Pooja and then would accompany him, Padmanabha was enraged and started abusing Rama of his sins and injustice to people. He beat her severely when she remained adamant and did not give up her devotion. She went to her parent's house to escape from all the humiliation. He was very much upset. He thought that he should straight go and ask Rama for spoiling his life. He also thought he should go to his in-laws house and drag his wife back or influence her to return. But his self prestige prevented him from it. But on the fifth day she returned. At this point of the story, the narration is converted into a flash back scene.

In this scene Padmanabha's wife returns home but Padmanabha doesn't open the door and receive her. He rebukes and humiliates her. 'Oh! My wife! Came home so early….why? Your parents haven't provided a comfort home?'(***MaNishada***, 148)[11] In spite of her admitting her fault, he continues accusing her of running away from home. Vasudamma, a neighbour comes on the scene and tries to console him. She tells him that the soldiers have arrived there. Failed to understand anything in his angry state he bitterly remarks that 'he is not Rama to receive his wife after she left her home.'(*MN*, 149) The Washer-man's wife, unable to bear the rebuke, goes to Vasudamma's house. The next

scene takes place in the same place where once again the Washer-man's wife comes home. She is able to get entry only when she has told him about the people who have arrived to kill him. The violent people surround his house and shout at him, hurl stones on the house. He learns that the remark made by him has led Rama to banish Seetha for life and this has incensed the people to be violent against him. But he is not frightened. At this moment a soldier arrives and makes announcement to maintain peace and order. Now the Washer-man decides to meet Rama and question him about his decision to banish Seetha for life and ask him to call Seetha back to save him from such public humiliation.

In the next scene Padmanabha arrives at the palace in Ayodhya and seeks permission to meet Rama. When the gatekeepers do not allow him to enter the palace, he quarrels with them. Hearing the quarrel, Bharata comes and asks what he wants. Bharata learns that the Washer-man did not mean anything serious in his remark and he was innocent. Bharata tells him that there is no use of repentance now as Rama has already decided and he cannot change his decision. The Washer-man says that he cannot bear the responsibility of Rama's action. Bharata then says, 'I cannot do anything. It isn't your fault. Rama would have found another reason to send Seetha away…' (*MN*, 156)

Once again the Washer-man is seen with the sage. His narration continues. He says that in the perplexed and anxious state left Ayodhya for Vishnupura. People identified him there and did not allow him to live. Then he went to Mithile, there also he got the similar treatment. As he was afraid of the people he decided to live in the wilds. In the forest he met a Saint, who took him to his 'ashrama' where the recitation of hymns and the serene atmosphere calmed him down. He was greatly consoled.The scene takesplace three years after at the Washer-man's house. Once again, the flashback scene continues. He comes to Ayodhya to see his house and meet his wife. He finds his house in ruins and nobody lives in it. He learns from a person nearby that the Washer-man used to live in this house and after he left his wife lived in it for four days mentally disturbed and

at last died of starvation. Having heard the news, now he is left with the deep distress and sufferings. The flash back scene ends here. The dialogue between the Washer-man and the sage that began in the first scene of the play continues. He tells the sage that he has completed fourteen years of exile like Rama himself searching for Seetha all over to ask her excuses. Then the sage says that she is dead. He also says that when Rama saw Seetha he begged for excuses and asked her to come to Ayodhya. But Seetha did not go owing to her sadness. At last she disappeared into the big crevice opened up in the earth for her. The Washer-man in his shocked state asks why she begged for death. The sage says that she refused to go to Ayodhya because she had committed a sin that could not be washed away by any washer-man. The Washer-man desperately pleads the sage whether there is no release for him from such miserable state. At this point the sage tells him that he is Valmiki and he too like him has been searching a way to unite Rama and Seetha. And at last he was successful but they were again separated. The Washer-man thinks that the separation was due to his remarks. For this Valmiki says it was not his fault. The agony of the death of the bird did not die in him. What's remaining in him was the curse he made on the hunter for killing the bird. The separation between Rama and Seetha was inevitable. The play ends with the Washer-man's question: 'What next? Should *Ramayana* end like this?'(***Ma Nishada***, 150).

The character of the Washer-man wins empathy of the readers on account of his anguish. The play focuses on the Washer-man's pangs of separation from his wife and the torture he suffered. Like ***Ma Nishada*** all of Karnad's plays focus on individual actions that lead to the final purposelessness. In ***Yayati***, Karnad reflects his own youthful dilemmas over the matters of family and marriage through the character of Pooru. The play examines the crisis that confronted Yayati after Pooru's decision to accept the old age of his father. Yayati's problems are due to his strong desire to live young and enjoy the life. Similarly, the misery of the Washer-man is due to his loose talk about

Rama.Yavakri's jealousy and vengeance destroy him. It is evident that Karnad uses myth to expose the absurdity of life with all its basic passions, conflicts and man's vain struggles of his existence. Karnad shows in his plays that the ancient Indian myths can be used to expose the modern sensibility of loss of individual identity through demystification. He makes revision, re-interpretation, invention and redistribution in the process of making it suitable for the drama. Having exposed to Sartre and other western existential writers Karnad has shown the features of existentialism in his plays. Karnad admits the influence of existentialism on him during his interview with Rajendra Paul:

> I was excited by the story of Yayati, this exchange of ages between the father and the son, which seemed to me terribly powerful and terribly modern. At the same time I was reading a lot of Sartre and the Existentialism. This consistent harping on responsibility which the existentialists indulge in suddenly seemed to link up with the story of Yayati.[12]

In ***Tughlaq***, it is more evident as Karnad transforms a historical legendary hero into an existentialist hero. Vijay Kumar M. Boratti and Nikhila Haritsa observe,

> The play explores the paradox of an idealistic Sultan, Muhammad bin Tughlaq, whose reign is considered one of the most spectacular failures in India's history. In the play, Tughlaq loses all the religious, ethical and community values and support, and re-enacts- by incessant chess player's moves – his insomnia, his hyper consciousness and utter isolation after he kills his father and brother in contrived accident and orders his step-mother to be stoned to death. His eccentric acts on the stage culminate in an endearing irrationalism when he appoints the clever comedian, a Muslim Dhobi turned- Brahmin –turned- pick pocket murderer to the post of civil servant.[13]

Similarly in other plays such as ***Hayavadana***, ***Anju Mallige*** Karnad foregrounds existentialist element. In ***Ma Nishada***, Valmiki's remorse indicates the futile efforts to unite Rama and Seetha. Valmiki tells the Washer-man:

> I am searching for what you have been after all these days. Reuniting separated souls…I am a poet. But the birth of my poetry happened in turmoil. In the form of a curse! A dying Krouncha bird's pangs of separation threw my life into disorder. To forget my pain, my poetry took me on a single-minded quest, the quest for unity. That is why I wrote ***Ramayana***. But as I continued writing it, the sounds that emerged were only cries of the sorrow of parting! Shravana, who dies leaving behind his parents; Dasarata, who meets his end unable to bear the separation from Rama; Urmile separated from Lakshmana; Kaikeyi from Bharata. Amidst all these partings, my single- minded pursuit of unity of Rama-Seetha into the form of *Ramayana* turned out to be one more narration of separation; one more curse of parting. Still I did not hope. One day or the other, Rama and Seetha have to reunite. I always wanted their union in my song. At last Rama and Seetha came together. But…. (*MN*, 158)(My translation)

Valmiki's failure to unite Rama and Seetha reflects the absurdity of his struggles. Similarly the Washer-man's search ends up with a note of futility and purposelessness. Like Valmiki, the Washer-man is full of pain that his search for Seetha for eight years ended on a tragic note. In his search, he loses his wife, donkey, peace of mind, and his house. Thus the play reflects on the anguish, guilt, exile and alienation of the Washer-man. The play, as Boratti and Haritsa observe, 'is an act of defiance against the general perception of the epic as the repository of value and tradition, it holds the Washer-man responsible for Seetha's tragic later life.'[14] Therefore, the existentialist approach to mythic narratives in Karnad's plays proves the fact that his treatment of myth is shaping, revising

and redistributing to show the contemporary social or political reality. The play does reveal that Karnad has started his career of writing plays with an assurance of writing more mature plays in the future. Although this play is his second attempt, it has certainly established him as a rare dramatist with a clear approach to myths.

Bali: The Sacrifice

For ***Bali: The sacrifice***, Karnad has drawn upon the thirteenth-century Kannada epic, ***Yashodara Charite***, by Janna, which in turn refers back through an eleventh-century Sanskrit epic by Vadiraja to the ninth century Sanskrit epic, ***Yashastilaka***, by Somadeva Suri.[15] Karnad came across the myth of the cock of dough when he was in his teens. Though Karnad wrote the play in 1976, the play in Kannada titled ***Hittina Hunja*** was published in 1980 after a few productions. After its publication it was performed in both Kannada and Hindi (productions by B. V. Karanth, Satydev Dubey, Prema Karanth and P. Lankesh). In 2002 Karnad's revised play titled ***Bali: The sacrifice*** was written in English when Leicester Haymarket Theatre commissioned him to write a play for them. This English version of the play was published in 2004. In almost four decades since his reading of the myth of the cock of dough and the first draft of the play, Karnad decided to end the play with the 'Queen impaling herself on the sword as the outcome of the rehearsal at Leicester.'[16]

In ***Bali: The sacrifice*** Karnad uses the mythical narrative to explore the multi-dimensional ramifications concerning 'love, jealousy, desire, betrayal and violence between men and women who are bound by the ties of blood and marriage, or encounter each other in perfect freedom of anonymity.'[17] 'Karnad chooses to address not the public and political carnage of war and conquest(whichled, for instance, the emperor Ashoka's conversion to Buddism), but the legitimation of violence in ritual practices that individuals (such as the Queen-Mother) regard as private acts of faith and worship.'[18] This shift of focus in this play reflects the lives of men and women who are governed by

the traditional or religious beliefs and practices. The four characters of the play confront, justify and compromise as all of them are involved in their quest for fulfillment and wholeness. These characters negotiate to fill the ideological spaces and in this process lose themselves or seek tentative happiness.

In the Preface to the play Karnad points out that the conflict of moral beliefs of Jain and Hindu religions, the controversy regarding violence in intention and actual practice, and difficulties of practical wisdom to deal with the moral conflict and dilemmas constitute the thematic approach to the play. The dramatic conflict operates at social, cultural, religious and psychological levels. The Queen crosses licit marriage boundary line and finds fulfillment with the Mahout. The King, in spite of all the mental torture from the Queen's act reconciles with the new situation to which the Queen returns. He tries to seek happiness through such compromise. But the Queen-Mother decides to atone for the Queen's sin through blood stained rituals or at least the sacrifice of a substitute like cock of dough. The Queen-Mother's wish to strike a balance between her son and the daughter-in-law and between herself and the young couple doesn't get fulfilled because the Queen refuses to succumb to any such sacrifices for the family welfare. Neither the Queen nor the Mahout feels guilty of the act committed. Therefore their reactions stand as counter points to the ethics of the society. It is when the Queen agrees at last for the sacrifice of the cock of dough, the death of the Queen occurs. This suggests that the intended violence and the actual violence are the same. Karnad in the Note on *Bali: The Sacrifice* discusses the religious practices as follows:

> The dialectic found some resolution when the Brahmins renounced blood sacrifice. Miniature figurines, made of dough, were substituted for live animals, a practice that continues to this day. Still, the Jains argued that this was no solution. Although no animals were slaughtered and no meat consumed, these figures of dough, mimicking the form of real animals,

> clearly carried the original violent impulse within them. Why dough rather than, say, mud or chalk? Because an offering makes some sense only if it is meant as food for Gods and is, therefore, cooked and consumed by the devotees. Thus the priests had merely replaced actual violence with violence in intention, which said the Jains, was no less dehumanizing. This argument gave the debate a much more complex ethical twist. The Jain position raises the Question: if intended violence condemns one as surely as actual violence, that is, if one is morally responsible for merely intending to commit an act one has not actually carried out in real life, is not one shutting himself up in a solipsistic world, a bleak, guilt ridden existence with no hope of absolution? [19]

In the play the cock of dough, although made up of dough, it gets life and crows. Therefore it symbolically suggests that the cock of dough is like the real live cock. The detailed analysis of the play is made here under to examine the characters, their beliefs, their practices and the motives behind their actions in order to reaffirm the thesis that the play makes a shift from the public and political sphere to the private and personal spheres to discuss the controversy regarding violence in intention and actual violence.

The play is not divided into scenes and acts. The actions take place till the end continuously with the songs of the Queen and the King as the prologues. The song of the Queen describes the two sections of the human soul - one driven by violence and the other opposing it. It is this conflict between the two halves of human soul is dramatized in the play. Like wise, the King's song reflecting agony, anguish and predicament provides a proper direction to the action of the play,

> Woe betide the times
>
> Where the king sits alone
>
> Outside on the steps

Racked by sighs

While the Queen is trapped

In her lover's thighs. (***Bali: The Sacrifice***, 190)[20]

Gradually as the play proceeds the Queen's infidelity with the Mahout in the inner sanctum of a ruined Jain temple is shown. The Queen comes to this place in the night because she had heard the Mahout's song so melodious and tempting. The Mahout and the Queen have spent the whole night there and except for the song there is no other reason for their union. The Queen learns that the Mahout, an excellent singer, is as ugly as 'bandicoot' and was born on the day of lunar eclipse when the beneficial powers of god were weak and his mother was in horror of a snake that had crept in to the nest of a sparrow and had gobbled up its eggs in their house. In spite of his ugly looks he is a good company and decent towards women. The Queen wishes to leave the place before it dawns as it was a secret meeting. The Mahout doesn't allow her to go unless she tells her name. She describes her experience as 'beautiful', but she is not interested either about the Mahout or about telling her name and herself to him. The Mahout asks her repeatedly to tell him about herself and she refuses to tell him. He guesses that she must be belonging to the upper class of the society. Once in the past, very much distressed about his looks he had asked his deity why he denied him good looks. He tells that the god offered to improve his looks in exchange of his voice. But he refused it and retained his voice. He then tells her about his deity. Later in their discussion he learns that the Queen is a Jain and she worships twenty - four Saviors. When he repeatedly tells her that he is ugly, the Queen says that he is not ugly, he is lonely and that's why he is holding her back in the temple. He doesn't agree that he is alone, instead he has god with him. The Queen's life is not much different, although there are people around her talking 'You can be surrounded by people who are talking-fawning on you - and you can be lonely.' (*BS*, 198) But in the case of Mahout the people come to him only for the music and then they run

away from him. The Queen enjoys every moment of his talk. 'No body has ever talked to me like you have. Nobody.' (*BS*, 198)The Queen is unaware of the fact that her husband, the King, has followed her and is, in fact, sitting in a shocked stupor on the steps of the temple. Inside the temple, she is happy. She is not ashamed of her infidelity as it was not planned, yet she is not able to bear a word against her husband. Unable to bear the situation, the King runs to the garden and is found by his mother who has just completed the worship of her goddess. She asks him about his sad state. The King gives reasons that do not convince his mother. She persisted asking him about the actual cause. Then he says: 'I had a dream. It woke me up…In the dream… (Pause) I saw that the royal Swan in our garden had got caught in mud and was flapping its wings.' (*BS*, 219)The Queen-Mother considers it 'a bad dream' (*BS*, 220) and decides to offer a hundred fowl in sacrifice to her goddess to slake her parched throat. Having heard this from inside the temple, the Queen tells the King that she will prefer the Mahout's voice if he doesn't stop the sacrifice. In order to prevent the sacrifice, the King confesses the truth to his mother that the Queen has committed adultery and she is actually with her lover at present, a fact that has reduced him to a miserable state. The King despite his misery, pleads his mother not to offer any sacrifice. After the King's long persuasion the Queen-Mother agrees to offer a non-living thing (cock of dough) to atone the Queen's adultery.

The King prepares himself to offer the cock of dough, a substitute for a live fowl. He tries to reassure the Queen that the thing was an 'inanimate' thing and demonstrates how he with his wife is going to do the sacrifice. The Queen doesn't agree to it. She thinks the very act of plunging in of the blade is violence. She says it is not a sensible act: 'Then why are you doing it? Why? Blood at least makes sense if you believe in bloodthirsty gods. But this…, you can't knowingly fool yourself.' (*BS*, 227) The King persuades her further to take part in the ritual. He explains how it reassured him and he should surrender to it. The Queen is not convinced and remains firm. She leaves the

question to the King and decides to go home. The King says that she can't go like that because, 'We are husband and wife - coupled in the eyes of god, joined together with the sacred fire as the witness. We are bound by our vow to do everything together.' (*BS*, 229) The Queen's question 'You want me to play your wife so I can damn myself as an adulteress?' (*BS*, 229) influences the King, who says, 'who knows, if we had listened to mother, we may not have lost our child……..' (*BS*, 229) This reply hurts the Queen as it questioned her belief. The following words of the Queen reveal it-

> 'Late in my life, I became pregnant and I have a miscarriage - and you are saying that it was a punishment meted out to me for my defiance. And I suppose that's why I haven't become pregnant since then. Your mother's goddess in her wrath has made me sterile! And all those years you have agreed with that god! How I loathe you and your mother and your whole.' (*BS*, 229, 230)

The King and the Queen reach a stage where they cannot compromise owing to the differences in their beliefs. The King as a Jain believes in non-violence. But the idea of sacrificing a cock of dough is acceptable to him. The King is forced to accept the practices of both the religions, owing to his love for his mother and wife. He is a torn self who has his due respects to his mother whose goddess is attired in silk saris, eats chicken, thirsty for blood and marries as living beings, and has accepted Jainism, his wife's religion and its principle of non-violence. The conflict is that he can neither support his mother's idea of sacrificing a hundred fowl nor agree to the Queen's open declaration to leave him and go with the Mahout. The King, who is trapped between his mother and wife, at last agrees with his mother's idea of offering a cock of dough as sacrifice instead of a live fowl because it is harmless. He says that he intends to sacrifice a cock of dough and for this he is ready to compromise with the Queen's adultery. The Queen on the other hand lived a life with due allegiance to her religion. She has conviction in non-violence

and is not prepared to partake with her husband even in the intended sacrifice. In spite of her belief that her husband is a wonderful, loving and generous person whom she cares about genuinely, she loathes the sacrifice and thereby her husband. The Queen- Mother with a new tactics supports the Queen. She tells her not to yield to her husband's request to agree to the sacrifice. But the Queen suspects the Queen-Mother of her ill intention. In their arguments their dislike for each other is revealed:

> 'Queen: you brought up your son drenched in bloody sacrifices, bile and gore in violence. He was bound to turn away. He's a good man.
>
> Mother: What do you know of violence? Or of pain? You seem so averse to blood that I wonder you didn't prefer to remain a virgin.' (*BS*, 231)

The Queen remains determined that she would never agree to the offering. But at last the Queen agrees with the King in his decision to offer a cock of dough. But when she is asked why she has committed adultery and whether the thing deserved it, she tells,

> I was sleeping by your side. His singing woke me up. The song was so – don't know how to describe it. But suddenly the note caressed me, enveloped me. They carried me away. For a brief moment, nothing mattered- The Palace, Me, You, Only the song. I felt like a flame burning bright pure. When I came to my senses, I was here by his side. That's all there is to it. It just happened (pause) and what happened was beautiful. (*BS*, 235)

She says that she feels 'fuller', 'richer', 'warmer', but not 'ashamed'. After a while, though she confesses and is ready to do anything else for him, she doesn't agree to the sacrifice. The King takes this as a challenge and humiliates her by the acts of love in the presence of Mahout. The Mahout is disturbed and starts shouting at them. He even thinks of throwing the dough outside. But he feels afraid of it and cautions them. He leaves the place as the Queen lets him go.After Mahout leaves she agrees for the sacrifice. The

Queen places her hand on the hilt of the sword as the King plunges it into the cock for sacrifice. At this moment the cock of dough crows and the Queen kneels before the cock holding the grains in a tray up for the cock. The King is irritated and in his anger squashes the dough. Thinking that he has killed the cock, she gets upset and she picks up the blade and lunges at the King and suddenly realizing her violence presses the point of the blade on her womb and impales herself on the sword and collapses. Thus Karnad dramatizes the fall of the Queen from her adultery owing to her childless marriage to her death at last. Karnad gives the tragic end to the English version of the play. In the play the death of the Queen replaces the death of the King and the Queen-mother of the mythical story. However, according to Karnad, it is equally conceivable that she kills the King: 'indeed, such a development would be more in accord with the original myth.'[21] Yet Karnad deviates and ends the play with the Queen impaling herself on the sword to intensify the dramatic conflict between intended violence and actual violence.

In the myth Abhayaruchi and Abhayamathi, the two boys are basically the King Yashodhara and his mother in their previous births. They don't get frightened by the terrible sight of the deity although they are going to be sacrificed. To the curious questions of the people the boys tell the story of their previous births and that forms the narrative of ***Yashodhara Charite***. According to their narrative, once Amrithamati, the Queen of the King Yashodhara gets attracted towards Ashtavanka, the Mahout for his singing. Since then she falls in love with him deeply in spite of his ugly appearance. She develops illicit relationship with Ashtavanka secretly. Out of suspicion, once, the King pretends as if he is fast asleep. When Amrithamati gets up in the night to go and meet Ashtavanka, the King follows her and comes to know about their relationship. In his anger he decides to cut them into pieces. But when he raised his sword to cut them, he realizes that he is in the Jain temple and he is a Jain. The King is very much upset and worried. His mother enquired about his sad state of mind. The King tells her about the

adultery of his wife through a dream image. The Queen-Mother suggests for a sacrifice of a hundred sheep as penitence. She threatens him that she would die if he doesn't agree to this sacrifice. The King at last agrees to a sacrifice of a cock of dough instead of the sheep. But the cock of dough crows when it was sacrificed. The guilt-ridden King and his mother prepare themselves to renounce the palace life and take up Sanyasa (Sainthood). But before they leave, Amrithamati invites them for a dinner and offers them poisoned sweets and kills them. In the next births the King and his mother are born as different animals. And at last with the blessings of Jain Saints they are born as Abhayaruchi and Abhayamathi. Unlike the death of the King and the mother in the myth, Karnad has made the Queen die in the play. The mythical narrative in the drama gets changed because the narrative has to suit the spectacle of the play. In this process the original structure of the narrative may not be seen in the play. So Karnad in ***Bali: The Sacrifice*** makes a few changes in order to explore new meaning relevant for the present day. However the core event of the mythical narrative, the Queen's adultery is retained and the motives behind the Queen's adultery and its consequences find elaborate discussion in the play.

Besides, Karnad has provided the background of the King and Queen with their first meeting, marriage, the family life in the two flashback scenes to reinforce the meaning. The King and the Queen were children when they met first. Though they belong to different religions the King out of love for his Queen, adopts her religion and its principle of non- violence. But the King's conversion is just partial. He is accused by the Queen-Mother for betraying his religion for the love of a woman. Neither it is easy for him to remain a pure Jain because the Kshathriya practices still exist submerged in his subconscious in spite of his adopted belief in non-violence nor a Kshathriya because he has given up his religion to marry Amrithamathi. The fifteen years married life of the King and the Queen has been full of psychological pressures as they remained childless. Their inability to fulfill the expectation of the kingdom with an heir creates a big chasm

between them. The disappointments and the desperation become an obvious part of their life. Yet he continues to call her 'My darling Queen' and she too responds in the same fashion. They stand together and face all humiliation especially after her miscarriage. They endure all the hardships together. But the Queen's adultery in such condition was inevitable and this brought tragedy to the family. Had there no such social pressure by way of ruthless scrutiny of the people around, the King and the Queen would have continued living happily. 'But discontent and disharmony lurk beneath the surface of their seeming conjugal 'bliss' and the layer of make believe harmony and affection is vulnerable to pressure.'[22]

The play, therefore discusses the motives of the Queen's fall and the ramifications of such adultery on the husband and the mother-in-law. The question that springs in the context of the play is whether only those who commit adultery with their bodies are adulterers, or those who commit it with their minds too are adulterers. Similarly regarding the sacrifice 'If intended violence, that is, if one is morally responsible for merely intending to commit an act one has not actually carried out in real life, is not shutting oneself up in a solipsistic world, a bleak, guilt-ridden existence with no hope for absolution.'[23] The Queen's act of adultery and the King's sacrifice of cock of dough are subjected for close study in the play as both come under the same formula of the 'intended act versus actual act.'

Unable to tolerate the criticism and humiliation for being childless, the Queen takes an extreme step of betraying her husband. In the absence of any alternative, the Queen takes such a decision. But her act of adultery invites more severe criticism from her husband, her mother-in-law and others, although she is not guilty of it. In the same way the King couldn't help agreeing with his mother about offering at least a substitute for a living fowl. When it was beyond him to justify the fact that his wife's childlessness doesn't owe to the sacrifice of living fowls, he becomes vulnerable to the age old ritual in

its refined form. Like his Queen, he doesn't find any crime in the sacrifice of the cock of dough. Therefore the denouement of the Queen and the King gets primary focus in the play.

S. Subhash Chandran observes that the play dramatizes the struggle between the two ideologies as the primeval confrontation between the Apollonian and the Dionysian forces. The principles of non-violence in Jainism and the ritual of offering of the living animals, birds in Hinduism are at war as they are viewing for dominance over each other. Based on the crowing of the cock of dough at the time of sacrifice S. Subhash Chandran states that the play asserts the victory of Dionysian over the Apollonian forces. But as the play probes the ramifications in view of the actual death of the Queen and the moral death of the King leaves several avenues for the new readings and fresh insights.

Sumita Roy in her essay 'Negotiating Ideological spaces: Reading *Bali: The Sacrifice'* discusses the two distinct streams of negotiation in the play. First, the characters negotiate among themselves and the second the dramatist negotiates with the audiences and the readers. The characters in the play have no individual names; they reveal various ideologies in their negotiations for our discussion of the relevance of such faiths and beliefs today. In the character of the Jain King, the faith in non-violence is shaken and vulnerable for change. In him there is a deep and unending ideological conflict which he tried to suppress. He is unable to give up the accepted mode of propitiating the divine in the family in which he was born nor accept fully the principles of non-violence practiced in the Jain family. In other words he is not able to live with the practices of either Hindu or Jain religion. It is in this situation he is accused by both his mother and his wife. When his ideology at the personal level is in jeopardy, he seems to stand in the middle between his wife, a complete believer in non-violence and his mother, a compulsive perpetrator of violent sacrifices. In the confrontation between the Queen-Mother and the Queen by way of negotiations the King is reduced to a helpless state. Like

the Queen-Mother and the Queen, he is humiliated at different levels and loses both of them when the Queen commits the ultimate act of violence against herself. Thus Karnad makes the readers to think about what violence and non-violence mean. Analyzing the title of the play Sumita Roy writes,

> The title of the play can itself be seen to contain a strange paradox: On the one hand, 'Bali' and 'Sacrifice' are synonymous when a person is sacrificing another living being to propitiate the gods. On the other hand, the word 'Sacrifice' mean giving up something which is a prize possession – ideological or otherwise. The King sacrifices his religion for love, but he is not able to remain true to his sacrifice. The Queen sacrifices her desire for sexual gratification under the pressures of procreation, but again she too slips from this idealistic stance. The Queen-Mother at a point when she wants to know if the Queen has sullied her marriage, says that she is willing to give up her 'faith and become a Jain'. But it is a facile sacrifice. [24]

She states that true sacrifice is rarely seen in the play. It is in this respect the ideologies dramatized in the play appear mere static ideologies that have no relevance at all.

> In short, Karnad uses the context of the play to hint at positivist, inclusivist possibility of ideologies…. The myth which he uses as the skeleton of his play abounds in numerous interesting possibilities and Karnad successfully uses them to raise relevant questions about the need to negotiate the accepted ideological frames being adhered to at present in order to arrive at a set of principles which have more functional relevance.[25]

Karnad, thus successfully has probed deep into the personal and private ideologies using the mythical narratives to examine the integrity of the people. Karnad responds to Tutum Mukharjee's question on the content of play as,

> The play debates the conflict of faith. There are four characters: The king and the Queen, the Queen-Mother and the Mahout. The Queen believes that salvation comes from living a life of compassion and non-violence; the Queen-Mother worships a goddess who she thinks needs to be satisfied with blood. Caught between them and being torn asunder is the King who has forsaken the faith he grew up with to embrace the faith of his wife and is in a dilemma about the right path.[26]

Thus the play focuses on the lives of men and women who are governed by their religious practices. The confrontation, justification and compromises of these people reveal their indispensable beliefs and convictions always at war with the newly accepted values for life's adjustments.

The Fire and The Rain

Garland Wright, Artistic Director of the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis commissioned Karnad to write a play for the production during 1994-95. Karnad had read three decades earlier the prose narrative of the ***Mahabharata*** by C. Rajagopalachari, and in which he found his subject for his new play ***The Fire and The Rain***. The play, originally written in Kannada ***Agni Mattu Male*** in the year 1993 was published in 1994. Karnad's trans-creation into English of the Kannada version was published in 1998. Karnad has used the myth of Yavakri and the Victory of Indra from the epic ***Mahabharata*** in a variant form as he had a long period for revision and conversion of the myths into a play. He writes in the Preface, 'Thirty six years is a long time to live with a myth for company. It inevitably grows and changes with one.'(***The Fire and The Rain***, 302)[27] The myth of Yavakri occurs in chapters 135 to 138 of the Vana Prarva (Forest canto) of the ***Mahabharata***. The story is narrated by the ascetic Lomasha to the Pandavas as they wander across the land during their exile.

According to the myth, Bharadwaja and Raibhya were the two great hermits endowed with extraordinary spiritual powers. While Raibhya was a learned man, his friend Bharadwaja concentrated on the ascetic practices. Paravasu and Aravasu, sons of Raibhya were also able priests. Yavakri, Bharadwaja's son, developed a grievance against the world for he felt that his father was not given due importance and respect. The fact that Raibhya was appointed the royal priest and his two sons Paravasu and Aravasu were appointed the priests for performing seven years long fire sacrifice (Yajna) for the King made Yavakri jealous. So he went to the forest in order to do hard penance to please Indra, the King of gods for the universal knowledge. The hard and rigorous ascetic practice of Yavakri pleased Indra. Lord Indra appeared and persuaded Yavakri that there were no short ways to knowledge. The knowledge should be obtained by studying through a 'guru' (a teacher). Yavakri was adamant and continued his 'tapasya' (penance). At last Indra was forced to grant Yavakri his wish.

After obtaining universal knowledge, Yavakri returned. He was very proud of his achievement. But his father Bharadwaja was worried that his son was not wise enough to use his knowledge. He cautioned him against 'delusions of Omnipotence and Omniscient.' Yavakri was specially warned not to interfere with Raibhya who was known for his fury. Bharadwaja's fears proved true as Yavakri soon after he returned from his Tapasya, cornered Raibhya's daughter-in-law Vishakha and molested her. When Raibhya heard about it, he was incensed. He invoked the 'Kritya' spirit. By making oblations of the strands of hair to the fire, he invoked two spirits: 'a demon' and another 'a woman' who looked like his daughter-in-law and sent them to kill Yavakri. While Yavakri was having his lunch, the spirit in the form of Vishakha approached him seductively and stole his pot ('Kamandal') containing consecrated water that made him invulnerable to danger. The 'demon' (Brahma Rakshasa) went to kill him. Yavakri wanted water to invoke his powers but every pond he approached dried up. Ultimately he made efforts to enter his

father's hermitage. But there the guard, a blind man at the entrance of the hermitage stopped him. At this moment Brahma Rakshasa approached from behind and killed him.

Bharadwaja learnt from the blind man how his son had died. He was naturally distressed. He cursed Raibhya that his son would kill him and was shocked at his own folly in cursing his great friend. He entered fire and immolated himself. Paravasu and Aravasu were conducting a fire sacrifice for the King. One night Paravasu thought of coming to his cottage secretly as he was not supposed to leave the place of sacrifice while the ritual was going on. Nearing his cottage, he mistook his father who was wearing a deerskin for a wild animal and shot him dead with his arrows. He unintentionally did this and when he realized that he had killed his father, he cremated and returned to the Yajna enclosure. There he told his brother about what had happened. He asked him to go and perform the penitential rites prescribed for Brahminicide meanwhile he would conduct the sacrifice. Aravasu obeyed his brother. He went and performed all the prescribed rites and returned to the sacrifice enclosure. But when he came back, Paravasu objected his entry into the consecrated enclosure and told the King that he should not be permitted to enter the sacrificial enclosure as he committed Brahminicide. The King ordered his servants to throw Aravasu out. Aravasu made his protest and told everybody that it was a lie and Paravasu had killed his father. But nobody listened to him and he was thrown out by the King's soldiers. Aravasu was sad and went to the forest and prayed to the Sun god for help. The Sun god appeared and granted his wish to restore Yavakri, Bharadwaja and Raibhya to life and make Paravasu forget his evil. When Yavakri came back to life, he was rebuked by gods for his flaw and asked to pursue knowledge in the right way. This mythical story is the source to this play. But Karnad's story in the play is a variant of the mythical narrative in some significant aspects. The myth had been in Karnad's mind for thirty six years, and he struggled with it, trying to fit the entire ramification of the myth within some sort of manageable shape. A brief discussion on the plot of the play seems

necessary before analyzing what additions and deletions Karnad makes in the mythical narratives for exploring the new humanistic dimension in the play.

The plot of the play is structured in three parts, 'like a trilogy' comprising of a prologue and an epilogue and in between these two there are three acts. In the prologue, the fire sacrifice of seven years to please Lord Indra is nearing its end, and a drama troupe arrives to perform a drama for entertainment. And in the epilogue it is shown that during the performance of the drama, Victory of Indra (Indra Vijaya) at the sacrificial site, due to the tragic happening it starts raining. The middle three acts dramatize the incidents that occurred during the month to link up the prologue and epilogue.

The prologue of the play shows that the seven year long ritual of fire sacrifice by the King to propitiate Lord Indra, the god of rains for rain to the draught-stricken land is in progress. Paravasu, the son of Raibhya aged about twenty eight is the chief priest to supervise the entire ritual of fire sacrifice. The presence of a spirit in the form of the 'Brahma Rakshasa' is introduced at this point. 'The 'Brahma Rakshasa', a Brahmin soul trapped in the limb between death and rebirth, is moving around the sacrificial precincts, though no human eye can see him.'(*FR*, 105) Unless released from the trap, he is doomed to wander restlessly and painfully through eternity. The prologue sets the tone of the play. Arvasu (Aravasu in myth) the brother of Paravasu approaches the King through the Actor-Manager with a request for permission to stage a play, one of the accepted practices at the Yajna. But it is also a practice that Brahmins should not act, as acting is confined to lower strata of the society. It is in this context Arvasu's special appeal gets importance:

> Dear elder brother, you once said to me: 'The sons of Bharata were the first actors in the history of theatre. They were Brahmins, but lost their caste because of their profession. A curse plunged them into disrepute and disgrace. If one values one's birth, one should not touch this profession.

> And I accepted this, but today I am a criminal. I have killed my father, a noble Brahmin. I already stand tarnished. I may now become an actor. This follows from your own words. So please do not bar the way now. (*FR*, 108)

Though the King has opposed it, Paravasu agrees as he thought that 'perhaps the sacrifice needs danger' (*FR*, 108) and a play has to be performed in addition to the fire-sacrifice. Arvasu is excited and his soliloquy reveals his happiness and also about the content of the next three acts. According to him the play is a fiction and the actual play had started long back. He says,

> He's agreed, Nittilai! He'll be there to watch the play! But where are you? Why aren't you here? Nittilai! Nittilai! I am going to act on the stage….. The play is about to begin. Yes, after all these years, it's going to happen. But you know, and brother knows, and I know that this isn't the real thing. This is a fiction, borrowed from the myths. The real play began somewhere else. A month ago. A month... It seems ages and ages of darkness ago. You and I were going to get married. Begin a new life…. (*FR*, 109)

The myths and the rituals comprising actions with real or borrowed characters are juxtaposed in the play to explore the differences and similarities between them. In the first act, Arvasu and Nittilai are shown as lovers. They belong to two different castes. Arvasu, a Brahmin is ready to sacrifice his caste to marry Nittilai, a hunter's daughter. But Arvasu should speak to the elders of Nittilai about his marriage. As Arvasu is on his way to meet Yavakri on the latter's request, he and Nittilai reach the hermitage of Bharadwaja. The hermitage is guarded by a blind man called Andhaka, who is a Sudra (an outcaste) by caste. They take him into confidence and discuss their plans and their castes with him. Although Arvasu is not a learned man like Paravasu he is kind and

humane. He says, 'I'll never be learned man like father or uncle. I shan't ever conduct the royal sacrifice like Paravasu or perform penance like cousin Yavakri. All I want is to dance and sing and act. And be with Nittilai.' (*FR*, 113) He is yet to disclose his plans about his marriage to his brother. He is waiting till the fire-sacrifice is over because his brother is the chief priest, and he would be disturbed. Further in the same scene, Arvasu and Nittilai discuss with Andhaka how Yavakri performed the rigorous penance and got his wish granted from Indra. Andhaka tells them,

> Ten years of rigorous penance. And still Lord Indra would not oblige. Finally, Yavakri stood in the middle of a circle of the fire and started offering his limbs to the fire – first his fingers, then his eyes, then his entrails, his tongue, and at last his heart-that's when the god appeared to him, and restored him limbs, and granted him the boon. (*FR*, 115)

But Nittilai innocently asks why Yavakri had to spend ten years in the jungle. Nittilai questions the life of the Brahmins and their austerities and the universal knowledge they gain as they do not offer solutions to the problems of the society. She says,

> You know, their fire sacrifices are conducted in coveted enclosure. They mortify themselves in the dark of the jungle. Even their gods appear so secretly. Why... My point is since Lord Indra appeared to Yavakri and Indra is their god of rains, why didn't Yavakri ask for a couple of good showers? You should see the region around our village. Parched.....Not too much to ask of a god, is it? (*FR*, 116)

She finally decides to ask two questions to Yavakri. First, when it will rain and second when he is going to die because she thinks, 'What is the point of any knowledge, if you can't save dying children and if you can't predict your moment of death.' (*FR*, 117) Yavakri, after obtaining universal knowledge, returns and proves that he has not grown wise. His egoism and vengeance are well revealed in the next scene. He deliberately

molests Vishakha, his lover before he went for penance, now his cousin Paravasu's wife with a view to avenge his uncle Raibhya and his sons Paravasu and Arvasu. He tells Vishakha,

> I cried at the humiliations piled on my father. He was one of the most learned men in the land. But he was scorned while this unscrupulous brother of his grabbed all the honours… My father deserved to be invited as the chief priest of the sacrifice. But that too went to Paravasu, your husband. (*FR*, 130)

Yavakri very cleverly captures Vishakha's attention reminding her of the day of his departure ten years before. During his austerity, when Indra had appeared and told him that knowledge involves control of passions, serenity and objectivity, Yavakri did not agree with him. He argued and remained adamant. He said, 'No, that's suicide! The obsession…. This hatred. This venom, all this me…..I want knowledge so I can be vicious, destructive!' (*FR*, 131) In spite of Yavakri's ill wish, Lord Indra granted him Knowledge So Yavakri is not changed and his vengeance and shameful act of molesting Paravasu's wife incenses Raibhya. He becomes the target of Raibhya's anger. The Brahma Rakshasa invoked by Raibhya with the help of Vishakha who pours the consecrated water out of Kamandal of Yavakri kills him. The act ends with Yavakri's death.

In the second act, it is revealed that the proposed betrothal of Arvasu and Nittilai hasn't taken place because Arvasu has reached the village late due to the tragic death of Yavakri. On the way to the village, Arvasu saw Yavakri running. Thinking that he was in danger he ran after him. But by the time he reached the hermitage Yavakri was found dead. As Arvasu had to cremate the body soon he was not able to reach the village to attend the meeting called on time. Nittilai's parents and elders have planned to discuss her marriage in the meeting. But Nithilai's father in his anger decided to give her in marriage

to a boy of their village.The next tragic event is also significant from the point of view of how Arvasu is victimized owing to the vengeance of others. Paravasu returns to his hermitage secretly and 'unexpectedly' in the night. Like Yavakri, he is egoistic. His jealousy and anger against Yavakri are revealed in his words to Vishakha, 'One can practice austerities like your fool Yavakri to coerce the gods to bend one's evil.... And when they give in, what do you do? Extend the begging bowl...As though one defined human beings by their begging – I despise it.' (*FR*, 140, 141) Paravasu's anger and hatredness are intense in him. He kills his father Raibhya as revenge against him. These words reveal his intention, 'He deserved to die. He killed Yavakri to disturb me in the last stages of the sacrifice. Not to punish Yavakri, but to be even with me. I had to attend to him before he went any further.' (*FR*, 142) Paravasu tells Arvasu to perform the rites of penitence as he should return to the fire sacrifice. He ignores the request of Brahma Rakshasa and returns to the fire sacrifice. Arvasu as instructed by his brother cremates the dead body of his father and performs the rites of penitence and goes back to join his brother. There, surprisingly, Paravasu accuses him of Brahminicide and tells the servants to throw him out. A few soldiers get hold of him and drag him away. The scene depicts man's jealousy, treachery, and pride through the devilish acts of the characters.

In the third act, Nittilai, who by now is married to another, leaves her husband and arrives to look after Arvasu. Paravasu's treacherous betrayal of his brother had almost killed Arvasu at the hands of soldiers. Nittilai has risked her personal life to take care of him. She advises him not to avenge his brother. She appears like a counselor when Aravasu says, 'But if such a man continues as the chief priest of the sacrifice, it'll rain blood at the end.' (*FR*, 154) Nittilai advises,

> Leave that to the gods, Arvasu. Look at your family. Yavakri avenges his father's shame by attacking your sister-in-law. Your father avenges her by

> killing Yavakri. Your brother kills your father. And now you in your turn want vengeance. Where will it end? (*FR*, 154, 155)

As the scene of the third act ends the drama troupe is seen getting ready to perform the drama near the yajna enclosure. The drama performance takes place in the epilogue. In the epilogue of the play, the play Victory of Indra and the ritual of fire sacrifice subsume into one. The play within the play is Victory of Indra, based on the myth of Indra and his brothers Vishwarupa and Vritra. Indra, the king of gods vows vengeance against Brahma, the father of all creation, for preferring Vishwarupa to him. Indra feels that his sovereignty over the three worlds was being threatened by Vishwarupa. Vishwarupa, the King of the human world, is Brahma's second son from a mortal woman. The popularity of Vishwarupa on account of his gentleness and compassion made Indra feel inferior and jealous. Indra plans to kill Vishwarupa. But Vishwarupa appears secured as he is guarded by Vritra, Brahma's third son. Vritra, a demon, born of a female of the world of demons is instructed by Brahma to protect his brother Vishwarupa lest his life would be in danger from Indra. Indra plans to invite Vishwarupa to a fire sacrifice to be held in honour of Brahma in order to separate Vishwarupa from Vritra and kill him. Vritra, as he is a demon doesn't get entry into the ritual enclosure. Vishwarupa agrees to go to perform the fire sacrifice in spite of Vritra's requests and warnings. Indra treacherously kills Vishwarupa while he is pouring oblations into the fire. Thus, Vritra's suspicion of gods is proved -

> They say gods should never be trusted. Indeed, it's said that when the gods speak to us, the meaning they attach to each word is quite different from the meaning we humans attach to it. Thus their side of their speech often denies what our side of their speech promises. (*FR*, 168)

The scene affects Paravasu, who has been watching the drama. He is reminded of his sin and out of fear shouts, 'They understand nothing, the fools, Indra didn't mean to

kill them.' (*FR*, 169) He prepares himself to release the Brahma Rakshasa. But Paravasu's cries and shouts reveal his own treachery and evil deeds to everybody. Brahma Rakshasa too realizes it and rejects Paravasu's offer of help. This moment of recognition is crucial in the play. The ritual and the drama represent on the one hand treachery and betrayal and on the other sacrifice and selflessness. Arvasu, who is enacting the role of Vritra is waiting outside the enclosure is now suddenly incensed by the cries of Vishwaroopa. The mask of Vritra worn by Arvasu 'comes alive' and he cries out for Indra, 'Another treachery, another filthy death! How long will these rats crawl around my feet vomiting blood' I must put an end to his conspiracy…' (*FR*, 170) Vritra tries to attack Indra who is the Actor- Manager dressed as Indra. Vritra chases him threatening to kill. Aravasu becomes the real Vritra, the demon in search of vengeances. The sacrificial fire now is desecrated by the hungry villagers who greedily snatch the food and drinks offered to the gods. In this commotion, Paravasu, in an act of defiance walks into the blazing enclosure and immolates himself. Suddenly Nittilai rushes into the burning structure and prevents Arvasu from his attacks. She removes the mask and throws it away. These words of Arvasu reflect how he felt in his attempt to attack Paravasu: 'I lost, Nittilai, and Paravasu won. He went and sat in front of the alter, unafraid and carried on with the sacrifice…He went up in flames while I stood watching, untouched.' (*FR*, 172) Nittilai's brother and husband, who have been watching the play, now suddenly get up and bar Arvasu and Nittilai's way and knock Arvasu first and then chop off her head. In his helpless and sad state Arvasu decides to kill himself and join Nittilai. 'But I'll come with you. Where nothing matters, not your goodness, nor my stupidity, nor this world's evil, where the fire will have reduced everything to ashes.' (*FR*, 172) He lifts Nittilai's body and walks into the sacrificial pavilion. But here at this moment the fire dies out and the voice of Indra is heard from the skies. Lord Indra is pleased to grant Arvasu a boon. Indra justifies why Arvasu is specially deserved His visit and boon,

> We loved the way you challenged Indra and then pursued him…in the play. But it could also be because of Paravasu's sacrifice or Nittilai's humanity. You humans are free to construe the acts of god as wish. The point is we are here and you can ask for anything you want. (*FR*, 173)

Arvasu wants Nittilai to come back to life, while the crowds ask for rain. Indra explains the consequences in restoring Nittilai back to life. All those who are dead will come back to life and the tragedy will repeat itself. As Arvasu has grown wise he thinks he could stop such tragedy and asks Indra to grant the lives of the dead back. But meanwhile 'Brahma Rakshasa' requests Arvasu to release him from the bondage. 'Brahma Rakshasa' was created by Arvasu's father and as a brother it was the latter's responsibility to complete what his father could not. Arvasu agrees to release 'Brahma Rakshasa' because, according to the latter, if Nittilai gets life, she would be tormented by the knowledge that her resurrection would have condemned the Brahma Rakshasa to a life beyond salvation. Arvasu's compassion, love, transcend him from his individual ego to ask Indra to release 'Brahma Rakshasa'. Lord Indra grants his wish and suddenly there starts raining. Perhaps Arvasu's sacrifice of Nittilai and Nittilai's self sacrifice for the true love bring rain at last. The selfless love cleanses and purifies the state of the world. The Gods are pleased by such sacrifice and grant the wish of the people. The play ends with rain.

Karnad has relied much on the dominant myth of Yavakri and the myth of Vritra and Indra in the play. Yet, ***The Fire and The Rain*** is a variant from the original myth in many a respects. The mythical narratives on their own cannot exist in the drama unless they are adapted. In the process of adaptation of the myths, they may lose some descriptions, some characters and gain some additions, some characters. While giving a proper structure the dramatist may have to chisel the raw material in the way he wants to articulate his expressions. In Karnad's story Bharadwaja and Raibhya are not just friends, they are brothers and therefore their sons are cousins. Yavakri and Vishakha are lovers.

Vishakha, unlike the mythical Vishakha (where Raibhya creates a woman who looks like Vishakha and sends her to facilitate the killing of Yavakri) goes to Yavakri to caution him against Brahma Rakshasa and surprisingly deprives Yavakri of his consecrated water. The entire meeting between them is different here. Raibhya's character is presented differently. Paravasu kills Raibhya as revenge against the latter's treachery and interference in his personal life. Paravasu thinks that Raibhya killed Yavakri to disturb him in his fire sacrifice and moreover he has exploited the lonely Vishakha. Brahma Rakshasa is in bondage and seeks liberation from it, where as in the myth he goes and lives with the female spirit created by Raibhya. Bharadwaja is not alive when Yavakri returns from his austerity to warn him against delusions of omnipotence as he had already died of a broken heart.

Karnad has deviated much while sketching the character of Arvasu. He is not spelt Aravasu instead 'Arvasu'. Karnad's Arvasu is not a learned priest. He is shown as a young man of eighteen having interest in dancing, singing and acting in the drama. He loves Nittilai, a hunter's daughter deeply and is bent upon marrying her. Nittilai is Karnad's invention. The myth gets humanized through the true love of Arvasu and Nittilai in the play.

Karnad makes a significant addition to the Yavakri myth in the play. That's the myth of Vritra and Indra. This myth is used in the play as Victory of Indra, a play within a play. The story of Vritra first appeared in Rig-Veda in which Vritra is killed by Indra. The same with variations is found in Mahabharata. Karnad employs the Mahabharata version in his play. According to this version Indra, Vishwarupa and Vritra are brothers – all sons of Brahma. Indra kills Vishwarupa treacherously for the latter's threats and popularity. Virtra's efforts to save Vishwarupa go in vain. This addition reinforces the subject the treachery of a brother against another. In the Preface to the play Karnad elaborates to justify why he juxtaposed these two myths:

> The story of Aravasu and Paravasu fascinated me as unusual variant of this obsession with fratricide and it seemed logical too that Yavakri should be their cousin though the *Mahabharata* doesn't explicitly say so, I cannot remember when I decided to incorporate the Indra Vritra legend in my plot, but years later, while regarding the original version I was astonished to find that right at the beginning of the tale of Yavakri, Lomasha mentions that the whole story took place on the banks of the river in which Indra had bathed to cleanse himself of the sin of killing Vritra! One of the fascinating aspects of dealing with the myths is their self – reflexivity.[28]

The theme of a brother against another brother is incorporated in the Yavakri-Paravasu clash. There is no direct clash between them and deliberate treachery from either side to destroy the other. Karnad has shifted the focus of the clash from the first generation to their children. Paravasu is sketched as a symbol of supreme egotism who is trying to equal Indra through his fire sacrifice. Yavakri nursed his vengeance all through his austerity and returned with the venom to destroy Raibhya's family. Both of them are devoid of the human values. It is Arvasu who has all those qualities and that make him win Indra and get his wishes granted. M.R.Verma and Sanjay KM. Swarnakar in their interpretation of the play state,

> So we can say that it is the interpretation of the myth that any knowledge which does not have the human values like compassion, generosity, proper understanding, good will, love and humanity can lead to envious hearts, egos and ultimately all ruin and destruction and that makes *The Fire and The Rain* very important and influential play in the modern times.[29]

So in the play, the ritual of fire sacrifice is redeemed through the myth which embodies human reality. The humanization of myth in the play gives the proper structure and meaning to the play. The title of the play ***The fire and The Rain*** represents two

opposite views of life. 'Fire' symbolizes destructive power in man. The characters such as Raibhya, his son Paravasu, Paravasu's cousin Yavakri with their intelligence, arrogance, treachery, and devil represent destruction. 'Rain' on the other hand symbolizes birth, regeneration fertility etc. Arvasu, Nittilai, hunters and actors are completely opposite to Paravasu and Yavakri. They represent love, compassion, honesty and concern. The sacrifice of Arvasu at the end of the play pleases Indra. The irony is that when the most learned people live a wicked life the ordinary and innocent people live sincere and compassionate life. The play also reflects Karnad's firm stand on acquiring knowledge. Generally all people seek education through teachers. But Yavakri on his own with his meditation pleases Indra and acquires knowledge. But the knowledge without wisdom doesn't help him to live a happy and peaceful life. It destroys him. Raibhya and Paravasu are great learned men. But none of them have understanding about life. Their knowledge brings no good either to them or to others.

The play depicts the complex human relationships symbolically. Karnad explores the complexity of relationships through the hybridized mythical story. The dramatist's humanistic concern is predominantly seen in the course of the development of the plot. The different locations for the action of the play and their inter connectedness through the characters have symbolic significance. The sacrificial place with Paravasu as the chief priest is important for the fact that all other characters irrespective of their castes assemble and participate directly or indirectly in the fire sacrifice. The hermitages of Raibhya and Bharadwaja, the hunters quarters are other places. In the hermitage of Raibhya the lonely Vishakha is exploited and mainly for this reason Raibhya has been killed. Yavakri is killed by Brahma Rakshasa right in front of Bharadwaja's hermitage. Arvasu's association with the actors and hunters and his love towards Nittilai have their existence outside the hermitages. Karnad makes all his characters meet at the sacrificial place at the end of the play. Here the self sacrifice of Paravasu, the tragic death of Nittilai

and Arvasu's generosity to ask Lord Indra for the release of Brahma Rakshasa please Indra and grant the rain to the land. Nittilai's concern for Arvasu and Arvasu's selfless love results in the tragedy. However, the same influences the God to be generous towards the people of the earth. Karnad's humanistic interpretation of the myth is very much evident in this play

The detailed study of Karnad's mythical plays reveals that the myths in the plays serve as vehicles to carry the playwright's new vision. The myths are reworked and revised with new characters representing the present life. The revised myths in the plays give new meanings to the past from the point of view of contemporary life. In other words, the plays in their hybridized form manifest both past and present to evoke a modern sensibility.The study also reveals whether the past in its full form in the play propagate moral values to the readers. Karnad, in none of the plays, has used myths entirely. He is interested in only those parts, characters, episodes, conflicts that are useful in the plays to tell the story. The purpose of using such pieces of myth is to evoke the past to revise the perception of the readers rather than reinforcing the moral values that are present in the past. It is for this purpose, as observed during study, Karnad supplements the mythical episodes with imagined characters and situations. Therefore Karnad's dramatic achievement establishes him as a dramatist of the post-colonial India. In Karnad's first mythical play *Yayati*, the partial myth of Yayati is shown. Yayati's wish to remain young and the exchange of his old age with Pooru's youth, although are retained in the play, the interpretation is done in the present day context. The present day emancipated character Chitralekha's logical arguments before Yayati shatter his dream of living young. So his realization that it is absurd to live when his life causes pain and sufferings to others leads him to return the youth to Pooru and leave for penance. In *Ma Nishada* the Washer-man's meeting with Valmiki to explore the absurdity of life is Karnad's invention. The character of the Washer-man in the play gets primary focus

whereas in the myth he is insignificant. Queen's death at the end of the play in ***Bali: The Sacrifice*** shows the fact that the intended act is the actual act. The controversy regarding violence in intention and actual act of violence between the Queen and the King has been dramatized in the play to explore how the practices govern man's attitude to life. None of the four characters in the play is ready to accept the views of other, yet, all of them struggle to live with them. The temporary compromises, the differences and the conflicts are predominantly governing their life. The King and his mother are survived by the death of the Queen unlike in the myth. Finally the characters such as Arvasu and Nittilai (Nittilai is Karnad's invention) in ***The Fire and The Rain*** with their human qualities evoke an optimistic view of life. The sacrifice of these two for the good of others has been shown as superior to the lives of those mythical characters that are governed by jealousy and treachery. The myth of Yavakri and the myth of Indra have been humanized in the play. Karnad's approach to myth is, therefore, not to use as a weapon to defend the glorious past of the country, instead, a way to get exposed to both good and bad to refine our perceptions of life. The critical and satiric interpretation is another dimension in the exploration of myths in Karnad's plays.

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Notes

[1] Nanda Kumar, ***Indian English Drama - A Study in Myths*** (New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2003) 1.

[2] Girish Karnad, ***Yayati*** (New Delhi: OUP, 2006) 73. (Subsequent references to this play are shown in the text itself)

[3] B. Yadava Raju, 'Race and Gender in ***Yayati*' *Girish Karnad's plays*** Ed. Tutun Mukharjee 81.

[4] Seema Suneel, 'Karnad's ***Yayati*** Reconsidered'. ***The Plays of Girish Karnad*** Ed. Jaydipsinh Dodiya 110.

[5] Kirtinatha Kurtakoti, ***The Tradition of Kannada Theatre*** (Bangalore: IBH Prakashana, 1986) 53.

[6] Jacob Paul, ***Contemporary Indian Theatre: Interviews with playwrights and Directors*** (New Delhi: Sangeet Natak Akademi, 1989) 79.

[7] B. Yadava Raju, 'Race and Gender in Yayati' ***Girish Karnad's plays*** Ed Tutun Mukharjii 86, 87.

[8] Seema Suneel, 'Karnad's ***Yayati*** Reconsidered' 105

[9] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 31

[10] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 31

[11] Girish Karnad, ***Ekanka Sangraha*** *Part. 2* Ed.Sindhuvalli Anantha Moorthy (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1986) 148 (My translation) (Subsequent references to this play are shown in the text itself)

[12] Rajendra Paul, 'Girish Karnad Interviewed' (Enact, No 54 June 1971).

[13] Vijaya Kumar M Borati and Nikhila Haritsa, 'Playing upon the Possibilities: ***Ma Nishada*** (1964) as 'Agasayana' in the 1990s' ***Girish Karnad's Plays,*** Ed. Tutun Mukharjee 62.

[14] Vijaya Kumar M Borati and Nikhila Haritsa, 'Playing upon the Possibilities…'65.

[15] Karnad, 'Appendix-2' ***Collected plays Vol One***317.

[16] Karnad, 'Appendix-2' ***Collected plays Vol One*** 317.

[17] Dharwadkar, 'Introduction' ***Collected plays Vol One*** xxxiii.

[18] Dharwadkar, 'Introduction' ***Collected plays Vol One*** xxxv.

[19] Karnad, 'Appendix-2' ***Collected plays Vol One*** 316,317.

[20] Girish Karnad, '***Bali: The Sacrifice***' ***Collected plays Vol One*** 390. (Subsequent references to this play are shown in the text itself).

[21] Karnad, 'Appendix-2' ***Collected plays Vol One*** 316.

[22] S. Subhashchandran, '***Bali: The sacrifice*** and Dionysian Life Assertion'. *Girish* ***Karnad's Plays,*** Ed. Tutun Mukharjee 297.

[23] Karnad, 'Appendix-2' ***Collected plays Vol One*** 317.

[24] Sumita Roy, 'Negotiating Ideological spaces: Reading *Bali: The sacrifice*' ***Girish Karnad's Plays,*** Ed. Tutun Mukharjee 290.

[25] Sumita Roy, 'Negotiating Ideological spaces…' 293.

[26] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…'49, 50.

[27] Girish Karnad, '***The Fire and The Rain'*** *Collected plays Vol Two* 302(Subsequent references to this play are shown in the text itself)'

[28] Karnad, 'Appendix-2' ***Collected plays Vol One*** 295.

[29] M. R. Verma and Sanjay KM. Swarnakar 'Girish Karnad's ***The Fire and The Rain***: A Textual Interpretation'. ***Perspectives and challenges in Indian - English Drama***, Ed. Neeru Tandon (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2006)

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Chapter-Four

Folk Revisited: Karnad's Folk Plays

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Folk Revisited: Karnad's Folk plays

Karnad's 'plays offer together a re-engagement between the apparently separated worlds and make the autonomy and accessibility to drama and theatre complementary rather than contrasting domains.'[1] As texts his plays are prescribed for study at the colleges and universities. They are also popular as performance texts and produced not only in India but also internationally by renowned directors. These two levels of engagements of his plays are owing to their richness in content and performability. The varied plots of his plays- mythical, historical, social, psychological and folk are firmly rooted in the Indian culture. They have wider appeal across the world. The study, performance and reception of Karnad's plays in different countries speak about the acceptability, the credibility and authenticity of his plays

When Karnad began his career as a dramatist, the major pre-occupation of the playwrights in India was to identify and develop Indian theatre. In their search for Indian theatre, Karnad and other dramatists found Indian traditional theatre forms (Sanskrit theatre / classical theatre and folk theatre / popular theatre) and tried to revitalize them by using their dramaturgy such as masks, mime, dance, half-curtains, music etc. While employing these theatre paraphernalia, the biggest hurdle was to have a suitable indigenous or 'desi' plot. The playwrights started drawing their sources from Indian myths, history, legends and folk. It is in combining the Indian themes and Indian dramaturgy the playwrights were able to revitalize the Indian theatre. Karnad's ***Hayavadana, Naga Mandala*** and ***Flowers*** are the examples of this type. The justification in this regard is available in Karnad's own words: 'But the basic thing I discovered was that the subject of a play has to be the human spirit using folk elements as mere aesthetic device to ornament the plays with songs, dance and colour was meaningless for me. The

technique had to be intrinsic to the plot.'[2] Karnad, for the first time in the history of Indian theatre, as an 'urban playwright had consciously used folk techniques and folk philosophy'[3] in his plays. For him, folk theatre exemplifies a continuity of tradition. But due to the introduction of western theatre by the Parsi companies the tradition was disrupted. Analyzing Karnad's concern and interest Tutun Mukharjee writes: 'Though he did not belong to any 'movement' or subscribe to any ideology as such to 'consciously revive' Indian folk forms, he did believe that post-independence India should evolve its own theatrical idiom considering its rich performance traditions, instead of mindlessly aping the western styles of drama.'[4] Karnad was exposed to 'Yakshagana Bayalata' during his childhood days. The folk tradition was fascinating to him. So, he obviously experimented the paraphernalia such as masks, puppets, snakes, framing tales, 'Bhagavat', songs and music, half curtains, prayer to god, oral tales etc in his plays.[5] In fact, these elements in his plays enriched the play's interpretive and performative possibilities. That's why both the literary critics and theatre directors are attracted to his plays. When the modern Indian theatre has become synonymous with European theatre, Karnad's plays find prominence because of their Indianness. The impact of the western theatre in India was multifold. First, the urban middle class learned to despise their own ritual and popular folk performance; second, they learned to appreciate western plays staged in the proscenium theatre; third, they began to build their own theatres on western models; fourth, they translated English dramas into Indian languages; fifth, they wrote plays in the style of English dramas. As a result of this the indigenous popular folk performance suffered. This situation has led the playwrights, directors of the post-colonial period to search for Indian theatre and revitalize it. The 'search for roots' movement was necessary because the Indian popular theatre was pervasive in rural areas, and it was a part of larger project of decolonization that has been taking place in India as a whole.

Another dimension of this issue is that there was division between English plays and Indian plays or urban performances and rural performances as 'high' and 'low' cultures. The performances based on the written script (western dramas) were considered as high culture whereas the performances depending upon the embodied knowledge (folk, Yakshagana / Bayalata) were treated as low culture. This colonial imposition has caused the Indian cultural Nationalists to counter with a proper strategic engagement by writing plays in the folk style. In the backdrop of such decolonization process, Karnad's folk plays are studied.

Hayavadana

Hayavadana, Karnad's fourth play is an attempt to employ the narratives of folk theatre to evoke the pre-modern world that echoes the contemporary reality. The play is another example of Karnad's ability to remake the past in the image of the present. In this play, for the first time, he attempts to put into practice the 'indigenous performance genres'[6] as a part of his engagement in the strategic decolonization of western Indian theatre. This attempt has revitalized the Indian theatre tradition. The play, in fact, led many Indian playwrights to employ the folk theatre tradition in their plays. Karnad analyses the play's remarkable achievement in the following words:

> …Because for the first time in the history of Indian theatre an urban playwright had consciously used folk techniques and folk philosophy to speak to the contemporary audience. After ***Hayavadana***, other plays in similar style appeared, like Tendulkar's ***Ghasiram Kotwal***, Chandrashekar Kambar's ***Jokumaraswamy***, and Tanveer's ***Charandas Chor***. The floodgates opened, as it were yet whereas I progressed slowly to achieve the form of ***Hayavadana,*** Kambar, who was once a member of a Bayalata troupe, achieved it easily in his play. Today, B. Jayashree performs in the folk style. [7]

For his earlier plays, Karnad has employed the narratives of myth and history. The popular folk forms with the theatrical devices such as masks, half-curtains, improvisation, music, mime, puppets, framing tales, 'bhagavat', and story within stories attracted Karnad very much. According to Karnad, it was during an argument with B. V. Karanth about the meaning of masks in Indian theatre and theatre's relationship to music he picked up the clue for his play ***Hayavadana.*** The story of ***Transposed Heads*** from the twelfth century Sanskrit story collection (***Kathasarithasagara***) provided Karnad the possibilities for the use of masks on the stage. The story, in fact came to Karnad via Thomas Mann's novella ***The Transposed Heads***. In ***Hayavadana,*** Karnad has employed this story to articulate his distinct view of feminism, the problem of human identity, and the quest for completeness or desire to evolve into a complete being. The play, the first original work for the Indian stage with its unique combination of the plot and performability produced a new intellectual and theatrical excitement during 1970's. Karnad was awarded the Annual Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and Kamamaladevi Award of Bharatiya Natya Sangh for this play. The play received three major productions during the same year and later many more productions not only in India but also in Australia and Germany. The play is frequently performed by the amateur artists, college students associations across the country.

The interpretation of the plot and the structure of the play has been done here with the sole purpose to understand whether the play is a folk play or a modern play or a hybrid play in view of the assumption that Karnad's plays revise the sources and employ 'satiric'mode to revise the perceptions of the past. In the original source (***Kathasarithasagara***), the story is in the simple form of a riddle. Dhavala, a young washer-man marries a beautiful girl called Madana Sundari. After the marriage, the couple, with the wife's brother goes out to take part in a festival in the city. At the 'Durga' temple, the husband in a fit of devotion cuts off his head and offers it to the

goddess. Shocked at this, his brother-in-law also offers his head to the goddess. The wife discovers the decapitated bodies in the temple of 'Durga' and prepares herself to die with them. But she is prevented by the goddess. She receives a boon from the goddess to bring the husband and the brother back to life. As per the instructions of the goddess, the wife joins the heads to their bodies, but in this process by mistake she switches their heads. The transposition of the heads creates a very big problem before her as to who is her husband. But she gets an unambiguous solution from King Vikrama. The one with her husband's head is her husband because 'the head rules the limbs' and the personal identity depends on the head. As in the story, 'the supremacy of the head' over the body is firmly established in the Hindu tradition and therefore the twelfth century narrative doesn't give scope for the discussion on the implications of incest.

Thomas Mann, a German writer has used this narrative in his novella ***The Transposed Heads*** with a few changes. In Mann's version Sita the central character is married to Shridhaman who is intelligent, delicate and sensitive. Sita is attracted towards her husband's friend Nanda. Nanda is well built, strong, and emotionally crude. The husband cuts off his head in 'Parvati's' temple out of jealousy and despair. His friend Nanda also cuts off his head out of fear and guilt. Sita prepares herself to die to avoid public shame and her son. At this moment goddess 'Parvati' appears and prevents Sita from dying. Like in the original story goddess 'Parvati' asks her wish. Obviously, her wish was to restore the dead husband and his friend back to life. Goddess grants her wish and tells her to stick their heads to their bodies. While joining their heads she has transposed the heads. This creates a problem for her as to who is her husband. But a holy saint gives her solution to her problem using the same logic that appears in the original folk story. 'The supremacy of the head' is sustained. Though her problem is solved, in the course of time due to 'the supremacy of the head' the exchanged bodies transform into the original bodies. The Shridhaman's body transforms into Nanda's body and Nanda's

body into Shridhaman's body although both bodies exerted their subversive power and change the heads for some time initially. Sita, while living with her new husband (husband head and friend body) was happy. But her happiness was short lived because of the transformation that took place in her new husband. When Shridhaman resorts to his original self, Sita starts yearning for the man (friend head and husband body). She returns to him with the full knowledge of the consequences of her action. Shridhaman and Nanda are unable to live in humiliation with such new relationships and therefore kill each other in the forest. Sita commits 'Sati' on their funeral pyre. Mann adds ending to this story by describing the future of the son born of the marriage between Shridhaman and Sita. The son is called 'Samadhi' and is extremely short sighted. He shows interest in abstract things and becomes a thinker and scholar. Thus Mann shows the impossibility of uniting perfectly the spirit and the flesh in human life. Mann illustrating his story writes,

> The world is not so made that spirit is fated to love only spirit, and beauty only beauty. Indeed the very contrast between the two points out with clarity at once intellectual and beautiful, that the world's goal is union between spirit and beauty, bliss no longer divided but whole and consummate. The tale of ours is but an illustration of the failures and false starts attending the efforts to reach the goal. [8]

This inter-cultural story (Indian story turned into German story and again turned in to Indian play) in Karnad's play gets yet another dimension. Karnad through this story deals with the problem of human identity and metaphysical anguish of the human condition. He also presents a distinct view of the emancipated women and man's desire to evolve into a complete being. This inter-generic story (from story narrative to dramative narrative) in Karnad's play gets combined with the story of Hayavadana. The Hayavadana story is Karnad's invention and serves as a frame story. The play is divided into just two acts. The formal scene division is not maintained in the play. The first Act

includes the scenes such as the worship of Lord Ganesh, interference of Hayavadana as a frame story, marriage of Devadatta and Padmini, journey to Ujjain and at last the transposition of heads at the Kali temple and the controversy over who is the rightful husband of Padmini. The second Act has scenes such as temporary happy married life of Devadatta and Padmini, Padmini's meeting with Kapila in the forest and its consequences and the meeting between Hayavadana and Padmini's child. The Bhagavata, the dolls, and the chorus take part in the development of the plot as characters.

The play opens with the bringing of the mask of Lord Ganesha, the presiding deity of traditional theatre on to the stage for the invocation of His blessings for the success of the play. The Bhagavata accompanied by his musicians sings verses in praise of Ganesha. Bhagavata's description of the Lord Ganesha introduces the central theme of incompleteness:

> An elephant's head on a human body, a broken tusk and a cracked belly- whichever way you look at him he seems the embodiment of imperfection, of incompleteness. How indeed one can fathom the mystery that this very Vakratunda- Mahakaya, with his crooked face and distorted body, is the Lord and Master of success and perfection? Could it be that this image of Purity and Holiness, this Mangalamoorty, intends to signify by his very appearance that the completeness of god is something no poor mortal can comprehend? (***Hayavadana***, 105, 106)[9]

Once the theme is introduced, Bhagavata formally starts narrating the story of the play. He says that it is in the city of Dharmapura, ruled by king Dharmasheela, there lived two young men and they are the heroes of the play. One was Devadatta, son of the Revered Brahmin, Vidyasagar. He was 'comely in appearance, fair in colour, unrivalled in intelligence'. (*Ha*, 106) He defeated the 'mightiest scholars in debates, on logic and love'. (*Ha*, 106) That's why Devadatta was the apple of every eye in Dharmapura.' (*Ha*, 106)

The other youth was Devadatta's friend Kapila. He's the son of ironsmith, Lohita. He is 'dark and plain to look at, yet in deeds which require drive and daring, in dancing, in strength and in the physical skill, he has no equal'. (*Ha*, 106) Bhagavata says that they are like Lava and Kusha, Rama and Lakshmana, Krishna and Balarama. 'Two friends there were – One mind, one heart?' (*Ha*, 106) Bhagavata's narration is interrupted by the entry of an Actor who was scared by the strange sight of Hayavadana. The dialogue of the Bhagavata and the Actor reveals that Hayavadana, a strange combination of man's body and horse's head was teaching the Actor civic sense as he was about to pass urine by the side of the road. The dialogue also reveals that the Bhagavata and the Actor are the characters of the play and they are performing their roles on the stage. Bhagavata sends the Actor again to find out who exactly the person was. Reluctantly the Actor goes. But he immediately returns as Hayavadana himself has arrived on to the stage. The use of half curtain as in Yakshagana prevents his sight from the audience. The fact becomes clear when the curtain is lowered. It is an incredible sight to the Bhagavata and to the audience. The Bhagavata abuses Hayavadana for scaring people with his Hayavadana face as he thinks it is a mask he wore and tells Hayavadana to remove it. Hayavadana doesn't respond. Then Bhagavata in anger tries to pull it off. The Actor also joins him. But he learns that it isn't a mask, it is the real head. The Bhagavata asks him how he got this horse's head. 'What brought you to this? Was it a curse of some 'Rishi'? Or was some holy place of pilgrimage, a 'Punyasthana', which you desecrated? Or could it be that you insulted a 'pativrata', dedicated to the service of her husband? Or did you.'(*Ha*, 112) Hayavadana then says that it is neither a curse nor a punishment, he was born with it. He then tells his story. This story is the sub plot of the play *Hayavadana* and it functions as not only a outer frame but also as an analogy to the main plot. This is Karnad's invention. The story of Hayavadana is as follows. Hayavadana's mother was the Princess of Karnataka. She was a very beautiful girl. When she came of age, her father decided that

she should choose her own husband. So Princes of every kingdom in the world were invited and they all came, from China, from Persia, from Africa. But she did not like any one of them. When the Prince of Araby came at last, Hayavadana's mother had one look at the handsome Prince sitting on his great white stallion and she fainted. But soon she recovered and said she would marry that horse. The rest tried to dissuade her but she was firm. Therefore she was married off to the white stallion. She lived with him for fifteen years. One morning she woke up and there was no horse, in its place stood a beautiful celestial being, a 'Gandharva'. Apparently this celestial being had been cursed by the god 'Kubera' to be born a horse for some act of misbehavior. After fifteen years of human love he had become his original self again. Released from his curse, he asked his wife to accompany him to his heavenly abode. But she wouldn't. She said she would come only if he became a horse again. So he cursed her to become a horse herself. The Princess became a horse and ran away prancing happily. The celestial being went to his heavenly abode. So Hayavadana, born to them, was left alone and is wandering about asking everybody about how he could become a complete man. His character has been impeccable. So he has taken interest in the social life of the nation – civics, politics, patriotism, nationalism, Indianization, the socialist pattern of society etc. He has tried everything. But he failed to find his society. In order to become a complete man he had visited all the temples and prayed gods but none of the gods blessed him. (*Ha*, 113, 114) His wish to be become a complete man is unfulfilled. Bhagavata then advises him to go and pray the 'Kali' of Chitrakoot, a goddess famous for being ever awake to the call of the devotees. At once Hayavadana prepares himself to go. Bhagavata tells the Actor to accompany Hayavadana. As they leave for Chitrakoot, Bhagavata resumes once again narrating the story. Bhagavata repeats that they were friends 'one mind, one heart'. But they forgot themselves when they saw a girl. Then Bhagavata and female chorus sing a song suggesting the triangular love, the plot of the play:

> Why should love stick to the sap of a single body. When the stem is drunk with the thick yearning of the many petalled, many flowered lantana, why should it be tied down to the relation of a single flower? (Bhagavata continues) They forgot themselves and took off their bodies. And she took the laughing heads, and held them high so the pouring blood bathed her, coloured her red. They danced around and sang. (Female chorus continue) A head for each breast, a pupil for each eye. A side for each arm. I have neither regret nor shame. The blood pours into the earth and a song branches out in the sky. (*Ha*, 116, 117)

Devadatta and Kapila the central characters of the play appear on the stage and the action of the central story begins. Devadatta is deeply in love with a bright, beautiful girl called Padmini, daughter of a leading merchant in Dharmapura. Devadatta swears that if he succeeds in getting her as his wife he will offer his head to Lord 'Rudra' and his arms to goddess 'Kali' Kapila, a loyal friend indeed to Devadatta mediates and arranges Devadatta's marriage with Padmini. The three appear like Rama, Sita and Lakshmana. However, as the play progresses their relationships get tangled. Kapila is drawn towards Padmini. Kapila's words about her and Devadatta reveal it: 'Devadatta, my friend, I confess to you I'm feeling uneasy, you are a gentle soul. You can't bear a bitter word or an evil thought. But this one is fast as lighting –and as sharp. She is not for the likes of you. What she needs is a man of steel.' (*Ha*, 126)

On the day of their journey to Ujjain, Devadatta and Padmini, as per their plan ensure whether everything is packed. Devadatta notices the mutual attraction between Kapila and Padmini and gets irritated by Padmini's enthusiasm. He expresses his anger and jealousy in an aside:

> Does she really not see? Or is she deliberately playing this game with him? Kapila was never the sort to blush. But now, he only has to see her and he

> begins to wag his tail. Sits up on his hind legs as though he were afraid to let her words fall to the ground. And that pleading in his eyes – can't she really see that? Padmini, Kapila isn't used to women. The only woman he has known in his life is his mother. (*Ha*, 129)

His jealousy is aroused when Padmini impatiently waits for Kapila looking outside the window. That's why he tries to postpone the proposed journey to Ujjain. When Kapila learns about this he is disappointed. In his aside he expresses disappointment and tries to control his feelings towards Padmini:

> So it's off. What am I to do for the rest of the day? What am I to do for the rest of the week? Why should it feel as though the whole world has been wiped out for a whole week? Why this emptiness? Kapila, get a tight hold on yourself. Go now. Don't come here again for a week…. (*Ha*, 131)

Though Devadatta and Padmini agree to cancel their journey to Ujjain, when Padmini sees Kapila's disappointment she insists on the plan. Reluctantly Devadatta agrees and all the three start the journey. The journey to Ujjain is a vital scene because on their way several unexpected incidents take place that has bearing on their life in the future. As they proceed Padmini is in high appreciation of Kapila for his steady and proper driving of the cart. After covering some distance they stop at a place to take some rest. Padmini explains her previous experience. She says that when she and her husband were going to a lake outside the city they had to return from the middle of the journey as her husband couldn't control the oxen. But today Kapila drove and they had no difficulty. Padmini looks at some strange flowers on a big tree and asks about it. Kapila says that it is called 'Fortunate lady's flower' to mean a married woman. Kapila climbs the tree to pluck some flowers for Padmini. He appears very attractive to Padmini as he climbs the tree. Padmini in an aside expresses her feelings: 'How he climbs- like an ape. Before I could even say 'Yes', he had taken off his shirt, pulled his dhoti up and swung up the

branch. What an ethereal shape! Such a broad back: like an ocean with muscles rippling across it – and then that small feminine waist which looks so helpless.'(*Ha*, 134) He appears to her like 'a celestial being reborn as hunter' (*Ha*, 134) with his swaying body and curved limbs. She feels 'No woman could resist him.' (*Ha*, 134) Perceiving this flame of love in Padmini's eyes, Devadatta realizes that he has been so innocent, so naïve all these days and takes a crucial decision. Devadatta tries to muster up courage and face the situation. He says,

> …And when I did, took the whites of her eyes for their real depth. Only now I see the depth. Now I see these flames leaping up from those depths. Now so late! Don't turn away now, Devadatta, look at her. Look at those yellow, purple flames. Look how she's pouring her soul into his mould. Look! that your guts burn out. Let your lungs turn to ash, but don't turn away. Look and don't scream. Strangle your agony. But look deep into these eyes – look until those peacock flames burn out the blindness in you. Don't be a coward now. (*Ha*, 134)

But he is so helpless and when Kapila talks about the place and temples around he is suddenly reminded of the oath he had taken. He doesn't accompany Padmini and Kapila to the 'Rudra' temple. Instead, after they leave, he goes to 'Kali' temple to fulfill his earlier promise because of his inability to endure the present situation in which he had to compromise and live with Padmini. In front of the goddess 'Kali' he tells that as She had fulfilled his wish by giving him Padmini, it is his responsibility to fulfill his oath. But in fact Lord 'Rudra' fulfilled his wish. Then he cuts off his head to the goddess and dies. When Kapila returns, he is shocked to see that his friend Devadatta dead. Kapila too sacrifices his head to the goddess. Before he kills himself he expresses his love for Devadatta like this: 'No, Devadatta, I can't live without you. I can't breathe without you. Devadatta, my brother, my guru, my friend….you spurned me in this world. Accept me as

your brother at least in the next. Here, friend, here I come. As always, I follow in your footsteps.'(*Ha*, 138) But in fact the actual reason is to avert the scandal due to Devadatta's death. Goddess 'Kali's' words reveal the actual causes of the deaths of both Devadatta and Kapila. She says,

> The rascals! They were lying to their last breaths. That fellow Devadatta- he had once promised his head to 'Rudra' and his arms to me! Think of it - head to him and arms to me! Then because you (Padmini) insisted on going to the Rudra temple, he comes here and offers his head. Nobly too - wants to keep his word, he says- no other reason. Then this Kapila, died right in front of me-but 'for his friend' Mind you! Didn't even have the courtesy to refer to me and what lies! Says he is dying for friendship. He must have known perfectly well he would be accused of killing Devadatta for you. Do you think he wouldn't have grabbed you if it hadn't been for that fear? But till his last breath- oh! my dear friend! My dear brother! (*Ha*, 142)

Padmini prepares herself to die because she thinks that there is no life for her without either of them or she can't face anybody now. She says, 'How? And what shall I say when I get there? What shall I say happened? And who'll believe me? They'll all say the two fought and died for this whore. They are bound to say that. Then what'll happen to me?'(*Ha*, 140) Goddess 'Kali' prevents her from dying and asks her what her wish is. Padmini is bold and frank to demand 'Kali' to restore the life of both Devadatta and Kapila. Kali fulfills her wish by restoring Devadatta and Kapila back to life. But while joining the heads to their dead bodies, Padmini transposed the heads. As a result of this two strange men are created- one with Devadatta's head and Kapila's body and the other with Kapila's head and Devadatta's body. Now they confront a problem of their identity. But their problem is solved by a 'Rishi'. The 'Rishi' who remembered what King

Vikrama had said gave the verdict 'as the heavenly Kalpavriksha is supreme among trees, so is the head among human limbs. Therefore the man with Devadatta's head is indeed Devadatta and he is the rightful husband of Padmini.'(*Ha*, 151) So Padmini gets the best of the hybrid men-the man with the Devadatta's head and Kapila's body.

Devadatta wins over Kapila as per the Rishi's verdict that the head is supreme and that is the sign of man. Kapila is the loser in this ludicrous bargain over who is Padmini's husband. He has lost his body, spirit and Padmini. His logic that body being the real person Padmini should belong to him. But this is rejected not only by Devadatta and Padmini but also by the Rishi. The new situation doesn't demand Padmini to break out of the moral codes of the society. She wants her husband to be an ideal man both in brain and brawn. She wants Devadatta's mind and Kapila's body while the society permits a woman to seek these two qualities in one person. But, when such a perfect man doesn't exist, she creates such a man by transposing the heads. Thus at least for a short while, Padmini succeeds in having a person of brain and brawn, the spirit and the flesh 'fabulous body fabulous brain – fabulous Devadatta.'(*Ha*, 153)

In the second Act, Padmini and Devadatta return to the city happily while Kapila goes to the forest with a broken heart. However, before they part Padmini runs to Kapila and tries to console him. She tells him why she has to go with Devadatta. She says, 'It's my duty to go with Devadatta. But remember I'm going with your body. Let that cheer you up'. (*Ha*, 152) Both Devadatta and Padmini live a blissful life. But unfortunately the logic 'head is supreme to the body' takes over here once again. The happiness of Padmini is short lived because Kapila's body is gradually transformed into Devadatta's to suit the head. The physical changes in Devadatta are conveyed through the dolls. The following dialogue of the dolls reveals the changes that took place in Padmini's new husband

Doll II: Why? What happened?

Doll I: He touched me, and….

Doll II: Yes?

Doll I: His palms! They were so rough once, when he first brought us here. Like a labourer's. But now they are soft – sickly soft – like a young girl's.

Doll II: I know I've noticed something too.

Doll 1: What?

Doll II: His stomach. It was tight and muscular. Now…

Doll I: I know. It's soft and loose. (*Ha*, 158)

So slowly Devadatta's head changes Kapila's body into its former delicate shape. Padmini, who was happy that she had the better of the two, now is disappointed. She feels that she misses the physicality and impulsiveness of her husband. Once again she yearns for the company of Kapila. She dreams about him. This dream is also conveyed by the Dolls. Devadatta loses Padmini to Kapila again. In the forest Kapila, due to his regular physical exercise, has regained his former muscular body. The Brahmin's body becomes strong. Padmini wishes to meet him. Padmini with her child goes to meet Kapila. Kapila is actually disturbed by her arrival. He finds it difficult to face the situation and asks Padmini, 'Why should one tolerate this mad dance of incompleteness.'(*Ha*, 170) He says further,

> …One beats the body into shape, but one can't beat away the memories trapped in it. Isn't that surprising? That the body should have its own ghosts, its own secrets? Memories of touch-memories of a touch-memories of a body swaying in these arms, of a warm skin against this palm-memories which one cannot recognize, cannot understand, cannot even name because this head wasn't there when they happened.(*Ha*, 171)

The meeting of Kapila and Padmini becomes problematic when Devadatta also arrives on the scene. Devadatta and Kapila meditate over the possibility of living together like the

Pandavas lived. They think that it is impossible. Therefore they decide to fight and end the problem once for all. The following dialogue reveals it:

> Devadatta: Tell me one thing. Do you really love Padmini?
>
> Kapila: Yes
>
> Devadatta: So do I.
>
> Kapila: I know. (Silence) Devadatta, couldn't we all live together like Pandavas and Draupadi?
>
> Devadatta: What do you think?
>
> (Silence. Padmini looks at them but doesn't say anything)
>
> Kapila: (Laughs) No, it can't be done.
>
> Devadatta: That's why I bought this (shows the sword) what won't end, have to be cut.
>
> Kapila: I got your body but not your wisdom.(*Ha*, 174)

Death is the only solution to their problem. Devadatta and Kapila kill each other like cobras and reduce Padmini to ashes. When they are dead Padmini decides to perform 'Sati'. At this moment she doesn't mince words. She makes it clear that she cannot hope to get perfection even in her next life. She says it in her prayer to the goddess 'Kali', 'Kali, mother of all nature, you must have your joke even now. Other women can die praying that they should get the same husband in all the life to come. You haven't left me even that little consolation' (*Ha*, 177)

Padmini's wish is unfulfilled. Padmini has confronted an impossible situation. Padmini's choice did not end her problem. It is indeed her existential problem. It is the predicament of a modern emancipated woman who is torn between two polarities (Padmini loved Devadatta as well as Kapila for two different aspects of their personalities). The perfection is impossible; therefore neither she could live with Devadatta nor with Kapila nor with both of them. Padmini tries to fulfill her dream of

perfection through her son. She entreats the Bhagavata to give him to the hunters residing in the forest and tell them that it is Kapila's son and they will bring him up. When the child is five years old, he should take him to the revered Brahmin Vidyasagara of Dharmapura and tell him it's Devadatta's son. Afterwards she commits suicide. Thus the story in the play reveals that the perfect union of the spirit and flesh in human life is impossible. The folk tale has provided Karnad a possibility to present the theme for its universal acceptability. The theme of the desire for perfection is reinforced at the end of the play where the Hayavadana plot juxtaposes with the main plot. The Hayavadana plot provides a greater dimension to the theme. His wish to become a complete man is not fulfilled. At the end of the play he tells how he metamorphosed into a horse:

> …I went there, picked up a sword which was lying around - very unsafe, I tell you - put it on my neck and said: 'My mother of all Nature, if you don't help me, I'll chop off my head.'…The goddess appeared. Very prompt. But looked rather put out. She said rather peevishly, I thought – 'Why don't you people go some where else if you want to chop off your stupid heads, why do you have to come to me?' I fell at her feet and said, 'Mother, make me complete'. She said 'So be it' and disappeared-ever before I could say 'Make me a complete man' I became horse. (*Ha*, 183)

In a hurry she granted his wish and therefore he became a horse. But Hayavadana still retains the human voice. He becomes a complete horse only when the five year old son of Padmini asks him to laugh. At this his laughter turns into a neigh. In Hayavadana's case also the logic 'head is supreme to the body' is proved right. About the comic ending of the problem of Hayavadana Kirtinath Kurtkoti writes that the horse man's search for completeness ends comically, with his becoming a complete horse, the animal body triumphs over what is considered the best in man, the uttamanga, the human head. It is the child of Padmini and Devadatta combines the two plots. The child is given over to his

grand parents where he grows abnormal. He plays with the dolls and refuses to talk with any person. He is not able to laugh like other children. Actor 1 says, 'Children of his age should be out talking a dictionary, but this one doesn't speak a word. Doesn't laugh, doesn't cry, and doesn't even smile. The same long face all twenty four hours. There is obviously some thing is wrong with him.' (*Ha*, 180) The child is incomplete because it has lost the child's natural privilege to laugh and enjoy. The child becomes complete only when Hayavadana laughs. The laughter of Hayavadana restores the child to normalcy. Thus Hayavadana story and the story of transposed heads (folk story) in the play delineate the problem of human identity, and the desire to evolve into a complete being.

Padmini, in the play, is portrayed as a symbol of an educated emancipated woman. She does not play the role of a submissive wife. She refuses to live a life sanctioned by the society because she doesn't feel comfortable in it. For example when Devadatta is anxious about Padmini's condition on their journey to Ujjain, Padmini asserts herself. She says, 'My condition! What happened to me? To listen to you, one would think I was the first woman in this world to become pregnant. I only have to stumble and you act as though it's all finished and you….' (*Ha*, 128) The song of the female chorus speaks of Padmini's desire and inner feelings.

> Why should love stick to the sap of a single body? When the stem is drunk with the thick yearning of the many petalled, many flowered lantana, why should it be lied down to the relation of a single flower…… a head for each breast. A pupil for each eye, a side for each arm. I have neither regret nor shame. The blood pours into the earth and a song branches out in the sky. (*Ha*, 116, 117)

Moreover she wouldn't have committed 'Sati' if either of them survived. So Karnad has given a voice to the Indian woman in this play.

Karnad has delved deep into the issue of class differences. Devadatta and Kapila are the opposite poles, yet intimate friends. They represent two different classes of society. There is no enmity between them. Yet they are not able accept each other. Devadatta is known for his intellectual scholarship where as Kapila is popular in wrestling and physicality. In spite of their close affinity, Kapila maintains distance and prefers to sit on the floor and insists Devadatta to sit on the chair. Kapila is ready to work for Devadatta as an obedient slave. So Kapila is more like a servant and oppressed than a friend or an equal. It is in this sense their friendship is that of a master and a servant. The borrowed story of the transposed heads exemplifies the different classes and their confrontation. Though Devadatta and Kapila continue to live like friends even after the former's marriage, the confrontation starts after the 'Kali' temple episode. Devadatta rejects Kapila and Kapila accepts it due to his submissive nature. Both are conscious of their positions. Kapila says that he is an outcast and yet he has been awakened by Devadatta. Devadatta says to Kapila that he wanted Kapila's power, but not his wildness. The following words of Kapila throw more light on the differences between them:

> Do you remember how I once used to envy you, your poetry, and your ability to imagine things? For me, the sky was the sky, and the tree only a tree. Your body gave me new feelings, new words. I felt awake as I'd never before, even started writing poems. Very bad ones, I am afraid (They laugh) there were times when I hated it for what it gave me. (*Ha*, 173, 174)

So Karnad discusses the class differences also in the play. However the focus of the play is to discuss the identity crisis of man. In the play Devadatta, Kapila, Padmini and Hayavadana confront identity crisis. The human identity crisis on account of the tangled relationships is discussed in the play. The desire of Padmini and the Princess of Karnataka and the mixed identity of Devadatta, Kapila and Hayavadana are dealt

artistically in the play. Devadatta and Kapila come back to life with the blessings of the goddess 'Kali'. Their separate identities get mixed up by the intervention of the goddess 'Kali'. It is a fairy tale that continues till the mixed identities gradually become original. The bodies of Devadatta and Kapila turn to suit their heads. Padmini's problem remains unsettled because of such change in Devadatta and Kapila. The Almighty's intervention in the human life doesn't provide permanent solution to human problems. This demystification of religious beliefs, practices projects Karnad's humanistic concerns.

The play's appeal to a larger population across the nation and world exemplifies the universality of its contemporary theme. Sovita Goel writes, 'It becomes obvious that the main thrust of Karnad's search was not to revive tradition but to understand and assimilate it for creation use, namely to express the contemporary human situation and its varied manifestations.'[10] So, ***Hayavadana*** is a modern folk play. Karnad, in the early phase of his writing career has employed western drama structures. For his play ***Yayati***, he has used Anoulih's ***Antigone*** model and for ***Tughluq*** it is Camus's ***Caligula***. But in his later plays there is a conscious attempt to blend western forms with elements from indigenous tradition. In ***Hayavadana,*** Karnad employed the techniques of folk theatre Yakshagana as the narrative framework. The paraphernalia of Yakshagana provided Karnad proper solution to overcome the problem of lack of Indian theatre tradition for writing plays. Therefore, the post-colonial resistance to colonial theatre and colonial attitude towards theatre got reinforced with the movement of 1960's: post - Independence, the anti - modern, and The Theatre of Roots [11]

Naga-Mandala

Naga-Mandala, Karnad's second folk play, has similarities with *Hayavadana*, though they were written in a gap of seventeen years. For both plot and techniques, the playwright has relied on folk lore. For ***Hayavadana***, Karnad held the prestigious Homi Bhabha Fellowship in 1970-72, and for ***Naga-Mandala*** Karnad was a Follow Resident of

Full Bright at the University of Chicago. Both plays deal with the life of women focusing on their marital and love relationships. The triangular relationship-one woman two men or one man two women has been a consistent pattern in his mythical and folk plays. In *Yayati* it is Yayati with Devayani and Sharmistha, in ***Hayavadana,*** it is Padmini with Devadatta and Kapila, in ***Bali: The Sacrifice***, it is the Queen with the King and Ashtavanka, in the ***Flowers*** it is Veeranna with his wife and the courtesan, in ***The Fire And The Rain***, it is Vishakha with Paravasu and Yavakri, in ***Anju Mallige***, it is Yamini with Sathish and David and in ***Naga-Mandala***, it is Rani with Appanna and Naga. This triangular relationship is dealt in his plays through the use of mythical and folk narratives as they function as 'a kind of cultural anesthesia'[12] on the spectators. About the energy of the folk Karnad writes,

> The energy of folk theatre comes from the fact that although it seems to uphold traditional values, it is also the means of questioning values, of making them literally stand on their head. The various conventions-the chorus, the masks, the seemingly unrelated comic episodes, the mixing of human and non human worlds permits simultaneous presentation of alternative points of view, of alternative attitudes to the central problem. To use a phrase from Bertolt Brecht, these conventions allow for 'complex seeing'.[13]

Karnad employs mainly two oral stories in this play. These stories offer the possibilities 'for introducing and eliminating, in our racial unconscious, cultural pathogens such as caste and gender distinctions and religious fanaticism.'[14]

> ***Naga-Mandala*** is based on two oral tales I heard from A K Ramanujan. These tales are narrated by women normally the older women in the family while children are being fed in the evenings in the kitchen or being put to bed. The other adults present on these occasions are also women.

> Therefore these tales, though directed at the children, often serve as parallel system of communication among the women in the family.[15]

As these folk stories are of women, they express the women's understanding of the reality around them and therefore, they are counterpoints to the patriarchal social structures. The dramatist has used these narratives to discuss the problems of women. Therefore the play shifts its focus from patriarchal society to the matriarchal society. The play is about Rani and Appanna, a newly married couple and their gradual understanding of the role and responsibilities as husband and wife. In the play the story is narrated to a Man, a character (a playwright) by a 'Story' (another character). Like ***Hayavadana, Naga-Mandala***, has a play within a play. The play has two acts and begins with a 'Prologue'. The characters of the prologue are the narrator-characters of the play proper, and their story constitutes the sub plot. The prologue is set in the inner sanctum of a temple that is in ruins. A playwright is seen sitting in the temple worried. He is sad because a mendicant had told him, 'you must keep awake at least one whole night this month. If you can do that, you'll live. If not, you will die on the last night of the month.'(***Naga-Mandala,*** 247)[16] The playwright was dozing off every night, and to night is his last night of the month. Therefore he had to keep himself awake. This punishment was because, 'You have written plays, you have staged them. You have caused so many good people, who came trusting you, to fall asleep twisted in miserable chairs, that all that abused mass off sleep has turned against you and become the curse of death.'(*NM,* 248) The Story, a woman (a narrator-character) narrates some events and like a Bhagavata (a modified version of Yakshagana) directs the play. Before the entry of the Story, several Flames arrive to the same temple to gossip. These Flames representing the women of the village gather at thiis place to tell their tales and sing songs. The Flame that came late tells the rest of the Flames why she was late. The Flame says that there lives a couple in her house. Tonight the old woman finished all her work and went to the room in which her husband was

sleeping. There she saw a young woman (Story) dressed in a rich, new sari. The young woman ran out of the house when she saw the old woman. The old woman woke her husband up and asked about the young woman who went away from the house. But he said he knew nothing. This started a quarrel between them. When other Flames asked who that young woman was, the Flame said that her mistress, the old woman, knew a Story and a Song. But all these years she kept them to herself, never told the Story, nor sang the Song. So the Story and the Song were being chocked, imprisoned inside her. That afternoon the old woman took her usual nap and started snoring. The moment her mouth opened, the Story and the Song jumped out and hid in the attic. At night when the old man had gone to sleep, the Story took the form of a young woman and the Song became a sari. The young woman wrapped herself in the sari and stepped out, just as the old lady was coming in. Thus the Story and the Song created feud in the family and took revenge against the old woman. And this Story (a narrator-character) after a while comes and joins the Flames at the temple.

The story of the Story is originally a folk story collected by A K Ramanujan. The present story is the modified version of the original story titled '*A Story and A Song*'[17] (published in the anthology of Oral Tales). The original story is about a couple. In the original story the Story escapes and takes the shape of a pair of shoes and sits outside and the Song escapes and takes the shape of man's coat and hangs on a peg. When the husband returns home, he notices the pair of shoes and a coat and starts questioning his wife. Her innocent reply doesn't satisfy him. He becomes suspicious. There starts a quarrel between them. He takes his blanket and goes to the nearby Monkey God's temple to sleep. There in the temple he learns from the gossip of the Flames that his wife was innocent and the story and the song she knew created this problem. The story ends happily. Karnad has modified the story about the Story in the play. In the play the Story is a young lady and the Song is a sari (unlike in the original where they represent a man),

that's why the Story is a lady character like all the Flames. The ending of the original story proves the woman's innocence and her husband returns to her. This ending has been dropped in the play. In the play the story has no information about the compromise of the couple after a long quarrel. However the triumph of a woman in the story narrated by women is retained in the main plot of the play.

The Story promises that her story would keep the Man (playwright) awake the whole night provided he, after he listens, should be pass it on to the others. The Story starts narrating the story to Man and other Flames. Throughout the rest of the play the Story, Flames and Man remain on the stage, of course with their intervention of analysis, observation and narration.The story of the Story is based on another story titled 'The Serpant Lover' collected by A.K Ramanujan. When the curtain rises, there is seen on the stage a locked house with its front door and the interiors. The play begins with the narration of the story. The story says,

> Story: A young girl. Her name…it doesn't matter. But she was an only daughter, so her parents called her Rani, Queen, Queen of the whole wide world, Queen of the long tresses. Her fond father found her a suitable husband. The young man was rich and his parents were both dead. Rani continued to live with her parents until she reached woman hood. Soon, her husband came and took her with him to his village. His name was well, any common name will do-
>
> Man: Appanna?
>
> Story: Appanna. (*NM*, 253)

Here the narrative is transformed into dramatic action. Appanna enters the house followed by Rani, his wife. They carry bundles in their arms into the house. After a while he tells her that he will return the next day for lunch and she should keep his lunch ready. He locks the house and goes to his concubine. Rani feels lonely and miserable. She misses

her parents, feels homesick and lonely till Appanna comes home only on the next day for the lunch. She craves for parental affection. In her sleep she moans 'Oh, Mother'! 'Father.' On the next day she expresses her fear and pathetic condition to her husband who doesn't care about it.

> Rani: Listen – (Fumbling for words) listen – I feel frightened – alone at night.
>
> Appanna: What is there to be scared of?
>
> Just keep to yourself. No one will bother you. Rice!
>
> Rani: Please, you would-
>
> Appanna: Look I don't like idle chatter. Don't question me. Do as you are told and you won't be punished. (Finishes his meal, gets up) I'll be back tomorrow for lunch. (*NM*, 248)

This is how Rani's married life begins. As her miserable days roll by in this manner one day she comes into contact with a blind old woman called Kurudavva. She is Appanna's neighbour and an intimate friend of Appanna's mother. She is brought by her son Kappanna as Kurudavva is blind. She talks to Rani through the window and comes to know that Rani is living alone because Appanna is still visiting his concubine. She feels sad and out of concern tries to help Rani to get her husband back. She gives a piece of root (aphrodisiac) and instructs her to grind the root and mix it in Appanna's food. She tells that she has used the same root to get her husband. This root was given to her by a mendicant who visited her house once. She explains how the root affected the boy who came to her village:

> One day a boy distantly related to me came to our village and stayed with us. That day I ground one of the pieces into paste, mixed it in with the food, and served him. He finished his meal, gave me one look and fell in

> love. Married me within the next two days. Never went back to his village. It took the plague to detach him from me. (*NM*, 261)

Rani after her marriage for the first time has some one to talk to like her parent. She is happy that she got some solution to her problem. As Appanna returns, he learns that his neighbour Kurudavva wishes to talk to his wife. On the next day he brings a huge dog, and ties it in front of the house because he doesn't want anybody to talk to his wife. Appanna's wish to keep his wife without any contact with the outside world reveals the attitude of a male dominated society. While men enjoy freedom, they expect their wives to be confined to their house. Appanna has extra marital relationship. He, in spite of it restricts his wife's freedom.

In such a miserable state obviously as per the instruction of Kurudavva she mixes the paste of the root in milk and gives it to Appanna. This doesn't have the desired effect on him. Therefore once again the paste of the bigger root she mixes it in the curry. But she is afraid to see the curry turning red and soon she goes outside the house and pours it on the ant hill lest she would lose her husband. It is clear that she doesn't want to harm her husband, even though she has been ill treated by him. She is a typical submissive wife where as Appanna punishes her for going out of the house although she has been serving him food timely. So, in him there is the unquestionable role of a husband sanctioned by the society and he is playing that role. He is expected to be indifferent and free. Therefore he is insensitive and rude towards his wife.

A king cobra called Naga consumes the paste Rani poured on the ant hill and falls in love with her. He visits Rani at night in the form of Appanna. He sympathizes her and showers parental affection on her. He asks her about how she felt when he beat her in the morning, locked her in the house. She, out of fear says she is comfortable and happy. Slowly Naga is able to take her into confidence. Rani doesn't understand the situation as Appanna cannot be so affectionate and compassionate. Yet she accepts him and enjoys

the concern and affection of Naga. She feels happy and secured in Naga's company. Naga is happy about it. After spending much time with her, it leaves through the bathroom drain. On the next day as usual her husband comes home. At the noise of the door, Rani comes out to receive him. She is happy that her difficulties have ended and her husband is caring her. But she is wrong.

Rani: But when did you go away? I'm……

(Freezes when she sees the expression of distaste on his face)

Appanna: Yes?

Rani: Oh! Nothing

Appanna: Good.

(Goes to the bathroom Rani stares after him, then returns to the kitchen)

Rani: I must have been dreaming again. (*NM*, 270)

The same fear, worry returns to her. Appanna bathes, eats silently as usual and leaves. In the night once again Naga comes but on his way he kills the dog. He enters the house and assumes the shape of Appanna. He washes his blood in the bath room and comes near Rani. Unable to understand the situation, she covers her head with the sheet. She bites her fore finger to know whether it is real and gives a cry of pain.The following dialogue reveals her state of mind:

Rani: (rubbing her finger) I must be going mad.

Naga: Why?

Rani: (to her self) His visit last night –I assumed I must have dreamt that. I am certainly not dreaming now. Which means I am going mad spending the whole day by my self is rotting my brain?

Naga: It is not a dream. I am not a figment of your imagination either. I am here. I am sitting in front of you. Touch me……

> Rani: You talk so nicely at night, but during the day I only have to open my mouth and you hiss like a…stupid snake.
>
> (Naga laughs) It's all very well for you to laugh. I feel like crying. (*NM*, 271)

She is sad and very much confused. Even Naga doesn't want Rani to question him. He wants her to accept the day and night visits of Appanna. Naga says, 'I am afraid that is how it is going to be. Like that during the day. Like this at night. Don't ask me why?' (*NM*, 272) This shows how the men in a male dominated society suppress the reasoning in women and force them to be submissive to them. Rani feels comfortable and moves into Naga's lap as a child when he invites her to sleep in his lap. She fails to know Naga's identity till Appanna sleeps with her at the end of the play. She suddenly sees the wounds in his cheeks and wants to apply ointment. As she opens the mirror box, she sees the image of a cobra in the mirror. But quickly Naga closes the box and pushes it away. She applies ointment and nurses him. Even at this moment she is unable to suspect the identity of Naga. She forgets herself in her happiness. The Act 1 ends with the chorus of the Flames as Rani and Naga are making love.

Act two deals with the repercussions of Rani- Naga relationship. In fact this act is the continuation of the last scene of the previous act. Rani feels shy and thinks that she has sinned by sleeping with Naga. Not because she knew Naga's identity but because for her such life is mean and sinful. The following words of Rani reveal it: 'Rani: I said be quiet (pause) I didn't know you were such a bad man. I should have known the moment you started using honeyed words. (Pause) had I known, I would never have agreed to marry you. What will father and mother say if they come to know?' (*NM*, 275) Naga is very much surprised by her reaction. So he says to her that the union between male and female is natural and universal:

> What have dogs done to deserve sole credit for it, you silly goose? Frogs croaking in pelting rain, tortoises singing soundlessly in the dark, foxes, crabs, ants rattlers, sharks, swallows – even the gees! The female begins to smell like the wet earth. And stung by her smell, the king cobra starts searching for his Queen. The tiger bellows for his male. When the flame of the forest blossoms into a mountain of red and the earth cracks open at the touch of the aerial roots of the banyan, it moves in the hollow of the cottonwood, in the flow of the estuary, the dark limestone caves from the womb of the heavens to the dark nether worlds, within everything that sprouts, grows, stretches, creaks and blooms – every where, those who come together, cling, fall apart lazily! It is there and there and there, every where. (*NM*, 276)

Rani's ignorance about it makes her disagree with Naga. When it is almost morning Naga decides to leave. But Rani is unhappy that Naga should go. Naga tells her again not to ask about the two contradictory behaviour of him when he visits during day and night. She agrees to it and doesn't ask questions nor suspects the identity in spite of the opposite behaviour of the two- one who visits during the day and the other who visits during the night (Appanna and Naga). While this scene is in progress Kurudavva and Kappanna arrive outside the house. They learn that the dog that Appanna brought just the previous day evening is dead. Kappanna sees a cobra coming out of the house. The foot steps (of Naga) they hear from inside, they mistake for Appanna's. Although the door is locked, they think that 'Once couples start playing games, they begin to invent some pretty strange ones.' (*NM*, 279) Moreover Kurudavva learns that Rani has started her married life. She advises her to burn incense and block the drain to prevent the entry of the reptiles. After Kurudavva and Kappanna leave Appanna arrives and finds that the dog is dead. He discovers that a snake has bitten the dog. Rani is astonished to see no wounds on

his cheeks. However, she doesn't have courage to ask him. Appanna as usual goes to the bathroom, finishes bath, and eats his food and leaves. Here the action of the drama is interrupted by the narration of the Story. The Story says,

> The death of the dog infuriated Appanna. He next brought a mongoose. The mongoose lasted only one day. But it had evidently given a tougher fight: its mouth was full of blood. There were bits of flesh under its claws…Rani fainted when she saw the dead mongoose. That night he did not visit her. There was no sign of him the next fifteen days. Rani spent her nights crying, waiting, and pining for him. When he started visiting again, his body was covered with wounds which had only partly healed. She applied her ointment to the wounds, tended him. But she never questioned him. It was enough that he had returned. Needless to say, when her husband came during the day, there were no scars on him. (*NM*, 281)

The reasoning in Rani is entirely gone, otherwise, she would have noticed that the two who visited her are different persons. She remains meek like an animal, because being inquisitive for a woman is a taboo. Naga's visits during the night make up for what she is missing during the day time. She gets love, affection, care, advice from Naga. Naga has in fact replaced the rude and insensitive Appanna by his night visits of affection and concern. She starts enjoying Naga's company. She keeps waiting for his arrival. These words of Rani show her interest and concern for Naga,

> Wait now. Don't be impatient. It won't be long… It will open out. Reach out with its fragrance (Rushes into her bathroom. Waits tensely, suddenly jumps up, and breathes in deeply) There it is…The smell of the blossoming night queen! How it fills the house before he comes! How it welcomes him! God how it takes me sets each fiber in me on fire!
>
> ....

> All these nightly visits of yours…But my real anxiety began as the evening approached. I would merely lay here, my eyes shut… the afternoon passes, my whole being got focused in my ears… (*NM*, 281, 282)

Naga is shocked when she reveals that she was pregnant because this is going to reveal his identity. He tells her to keep it a secret as long as possible. But Rani is worried about keeping her pregnancy of five months a secret. She is not able to make out any sense from Naga's behaviour. For her, though both Appanna and Naga are opposite in their behaviour and character, they are similar in their instructions. She says,

> …Don't ask questions. Do as I tell you. Don't ask questions. Do as I tell you. No I won't ask questions. I shall do what you tell me, scowls in the day. Embrace at night. The snarl in the morning unrelated to the cares at night. But day or night, one motto does not change. Don't ask questions. Do as I tell you. (*NM*, 283)

When Appanna comes the next day, he finds out that Rani is pregnant. He accuses her of her adultery. In his anger, he beats her, kicks her. He drags her out and picks up a huge stone to throw on her. Just then a cobra moves forward from the ant hill and hisses at Appanna to distract his attention. Appanna throws the stone at the cobra. Rani uses this moment to run into the house and lock herself in. Appanna demands her to open the door. But she refuses. Appanna now goes to meet the village elders for complaining against her. That night when Naga comes she tells him that instead of humiliating like that, he should kill her. He tells her that the trial by the village elders is unavoidable. Therefore she should face it and prove her innocence through snake ordeal. All her problems will end, he says, and her husband would be a slave to her. Rani, in her miserable and helpless state runs to Naga and embraces him. She decides to prevent him going away from her. But by then he is gone. She sees that the door is locked from inside, but it doesn't occur to her that there is no chance for Naga to leave from the house. Her reasoning power is

completely dead in her. She is not able to associate things and grasp. In the morning the villagers do assemble to hear the complaint. They say that they must judge the merits of complaint of Appanna, for which the traditionally accepted test are the accused will hold the red hot iron in hand or plunge the hand in the boiling oil while taking the oath. Rani requests them to permit her to have more terrible test of snake ordeal. They agree to it. She puts her hand in the ant hill and takes the cobra out. Holding the cobra in hand, she tells that she has not touched anybody other than her husband and cobra. The cobra doesn't bite her, instead spreads its hood over her head like an umbrella. After a while it crawls down and disappears into the ant hill. It is a miracle for everybody who gathered there. People out of devotion move towards her and prostrate before her. The village elders consider Rani no ordinary woman. They take her and Appanna to her home in a 'Palanquin' in a procession. The elders tell Appanna that he was the chosen husband for the revelation of her divinity and therefore he should spend the rest of his life in her service as 'you need merit in ten past lives to be chosen for such holy deity.' (*NM*, 293) After the crowd disperses Appanna also falls at her feet and begs her for forgiveness. At this moment the Story intervenes and continues the story by narrating it-

> So Rani got everything she wished for, a devoted husband, a happy life. For Appanna's concubine was present at the trial. She saw Rani's glory; she felt ashamed of her sinful life and volunteered to do menial work in Rani's house. Thus Rani even got a life long servant to draw water for her house. In due course, Rani gave birth to a beautiful child. A son. Rani lived happily ever after with her husband, child and servant. (*NM*, 293)

As Naga assured her that she would get all she had ever wanted, she has got her wishes fulfilled. All the flames get ready to leave because they think that the story comes to an end. The Man (playwright) is not happy about this ending. He has questions about Kappanna's disappearance, Appanna's misery, Rani's realization of the two men who had

played the role of her husband, and Naga's life. The Story tells that for Kurudavva's story that the Man would meet him somewhere and ask him to tell him the story. As the Story is the story of Rani she is able to say only about Rani. When the Man asks about Appanna's state, Appanna himself appears and says his sorry state:

> What am I to do? Is the whole world against me? Have I sinned so much that even nature should laugh at me? I know I haven't slept with my wife. Let the world say what it likes. Let any miracle declare her a goddess. But I know! What sense I am to make of my life if that's worth nothing? (*NM*, 294)

This is Karnad's addition. Karnad gives expression to the genuine feelings of Appanna that are not spelt out in the original folk story. As far as Rani is concerned questions such as 'When her true husband climbed into bed with her, how could she fail to realize it was some one new? Even if she hadn't known earlier. And when did the split take place?' (*NM*, 295) are not answered. The Story says that it is true but 'When one says, that 'they lived happily ever after, all that is taken for granted' (*NM*, 295) because such headaches are swept off under the pillow. The Story says, 'It is something one has to live with, like a husband who snores, or a wife who is going bald.' (*NM*, 295) The Man still is not convinced with such ending as there is no reference to Naga. The Story tells that one day Naga did come to see Rani. As the dialogue between the Man and the Story takes place Naga arrives in the human form. The long speech of Naga reflects his feelings. He summons magical power and becomes the size of her tresses. He covers himself with her hair and dances. At last he ties a tress into a noose and places it around his neck. He commits suicide. Appanna and Rani are woken up by Kurudavva's calls for Kappanna. Suddenly Rani feels her head heavy. She combs her hair but when she fails to comb the thing caught in the hair, Appanna combs. A dead cobra false on the floor. She expresses her gratitude to Naga for saving them by making her son to perform the last rites for the

dead cobra. Appanna also agrees to it. As per her wish, her son would perform the annual rites to commemorate his death. Appanna never bothers about Rani's adultery and tells that every wish of her will be fulfilled. Although the Flames appreciate these endings, they challenge with the Man to give a proper ending before it gets dawn. 'Flames: stop making excuses! You are a playwright, aren't you? The story may be over. But you are still here and still alive!...Listen, we don't have much time left...get on with it, for goodness' sake, etc.' (*NM*, 298) The Man (playwright), perhaps Karnad himself gives another ending to the story. While Appanna and Rani are sleeping, Rani suddenly moans and sits up. She feels that someone is pulling her hair and it is painful for her. When she combs her hair with the help of Appanna a live snake falls out of her hair. Appanna cries and searches for a stick in the bathroom to kill it. But Rani out of concern rescues it. She hides the snake in her hair. Her words '....Quick now. Get in. Are you safely in there? Good. Now stay there. And lie still. You don't know how heavy you are. Let me get used to you, will you?'[18] reveal Rani's wish to live with Naga. Thus she succeeds in her struggle of life over her husband. *The Serpent Lover* is the source for the main plot of the play. Karnad has used the story with minor changes. The lady character of original story is Kamakshi where as she is Rani in the play. Kamakshi, when she was pregnant, the snake tells the truth to her that he is the King of snakes and after he drank the porridge she poured into the snake hole, he madly fell in love with her. The snake in fact changes his shape in to a five headed snake. In the play Naga doesn't disclose his identity at all. Kamakshi's husband is not very cruel and he gives complaint to his father-in-law. The father-in-law in turn gives complaint to the King. In the Story the trial takes place at the King's court where as in the play it is the village elders who hear her case. In the chastity test at the Shiva Temple she proves her innocence and turns out to be 'a paragon of wives, a pativrata.' There is no reference to the concubine's presence at the court in the Story. In the play, she is present and after witnessing the glory of Rani voluntarily takes up to serve

Rani. But in the Story, she becomes anxious about Kamakshi's husband as he used to spend more time at home than with her. She learns about the newly born child that prevented her lover from leaving his house. The concubine expresses her wish to see the child. But Kamakshi cleverly agrees to send the child on a condition – she puts lot of Jewellery on her son and she will weigh when she sends him to her and she will weigh him again when he returns. If anything is missing, the concubine will have to be her servant to draw water to her house. This is a small trick she plays, of course guided by her serpent lover. As the boy returns, she weighs him. She finds the jewellary is missing. So she gets the concubine as her servant. The ending of the play is Karnad's invention. The Naga survives and finds protection in Rani's tresses. Perhaps Karnad intends to reinforce the feminist cause by rescuing Naga from his suicide attempt. Thus Karnad's treatment of the subject exemplifies his interest in the socio- cultural reform through a shift from the patriarchy to the matriarchy.

Flowers (A Monologue)

Flowers and ***Broken Images*** are Karnad's two short dramatic monologues. Karnad for the first time during his long career of writing dramas makes an unprecedented experiment both in content and form in these two narratives. ***Broken Images*** is not a complete departure from the earlier dramaturgy because it is in the dramatic form. But ***Flowers*** is in a narrative form. ***Broken Images*** deals with a contemporary subject without drawing source from the myths or history or folk. ***Flowers***, an eighteen pages narrative has neither a Preface nor a note by the author except two pages introduction by Aparna Dharwadkar. (To the ***Collected Plays Vol. Two***) The narrative is based on the folklore like ***Hayavadana*** and ***Naga-Mandala***. Aparna Dharwadkar refers to the shift Karnad makes in this narration as, 'The first work in this genre to focus on male rather than female desire, thus registering a small but important shift in Karnad's dramaturgy.'[19] But Jasbir Jain finds it, 'both a continuity of his earlier themes and departure from them.'[20]

Except ***Ma Nishada, Flowers,*** and ***Broken Images*** all of Karnad's earlier plays and including the latest play (***Wedding Album***) are full length plays. The plays have scene divisions; although the scene divisions are not consistent in their pattern. The stage directions throughout ensure greater possibility for stage productions. That's why all of Karnad's plays excluding ***Flowers*** have been produced in different languages at regional, national and international levels. What ever may be the reasons for the non performability ***Flowers*** in particular, the study of it cannot be avoided just for the reason that it is not produced. The study aims at finding out basically from where the playwright draws upon the source, how the source has been handled and what effect it created upon the readers through the narrative. The question to which genre of literature does this narrative belong is not easy to answer as the narrative has elements of all genre. Jasbir Jain writes,

> It is of mixed genre: a prose piece or a radio play, a single narrator, the absent unidentified listener, the conflict which never gets fully developed, the undercurrent of the oppositional strands both within the psyche and outside it, the work eludes a defined identity. It is not a story, though it tells a story, not a play for the moment there is enactment, small pockets of space would fragment the tension, and not a poem despite the lyrical description which evokes an emotive response.[21]

This inter-generic text (from a novel into a monologue) Karnad wrote after he had written majority of his plays. This play demands hard task on the part of the critic because this narrative is both a 'continuity' and 'departure' from the earlier themes. In order to explore this there is a need to understand the source and the modification made to suit to the narrative.

As stated in the introduction by Aparna Dharwadkar, the narrative has its source in the legendary story of Veeranna belonging to Chitradurga region. The legend has been popularized by T.R.Subba Rao (Kannada Novelist) through his historical novel

Hamsageethe (literally means Swan song). Venkatasubbayya, the protagonist of the novel is a singer. The narrator in the beginning of the story, while describing a place where Venkatasubbayya used to sit and sing, narrates the story of Veeranna. During a particular Chieftain's (last one to occupy the position) period, Veeranna was the priest of the Hidimbeshwara temple. His weakness was that he loved another lady more than his wife. He used to take the offerings after the evening 'Pooja' to his lover everyday. This continued for several years. The regular practice was that the Chieftain would visit all the temples in the evening and after the 'dharhan' he would receive 'Prasada' and leave. But before he would leave his palace there would be the sound of canon for the people to get ready for the evening prayers at the temples. By the time he reaches the temples the priests would finish 'Pooja' and get ready for the final 'arati'. Soon, in his presence 'arati' is done, and priest gives 'Prasada' to the Chieftain and to the rest. One day the priest was ready for the evening prayers. But the Chieftain did not come at the regular time. The priest waited for a long time. He was anxious about his mistress' anger for being late. At last thinking that the Chieftain would not come he finished arati and collected the flowers and offering and went to his mistress' house. He gave her flowers and ate the food and was ready to go to bed. Exactly at this moment he heard the sound of the canon. He immediately returned with those used flowers to the temple. Once again he decorated the image of the God with those flowers and by the time the Chieftain arrived he was ready. After the prayers the Chieftain received the 'Prasada'. But to his astonishment he saw a hair in it. He asked the priest about it. The priest replied that it was from the tresses of God. The Chieftain did not believe it. He said that he was lying. But the priest said that it was true and he could find the tresses on the 'Linga'. Venkatasubbayya who had accompanied the Chieftain tried to convince him that they should not challenge God. The Chieftain was determined and wanted to test. At the suggestion of Venkatasubbayya he agreed to have the trial on the next day. After everybody left, the priest bathed in the pond

and went straight to the temple in the wet cloth and sat for prayer in front of the God. Venkatasubbayya also arrived and joined the prayer with his songs. They prayed God to bless them with the tresses on the head of the 'Linga'. The prayer pleased God and Veeranna was saved. When the Chieftain came the next day he saw the tresses on the head of the stone image. When the singer urged him to pull the hair the Chieftain pulled but for the surprise of all the head of the 'Linga' started bleeding. It was the real tresses. The Chieftain admitted his defeat. But by then the priest fell unconscious. After he regained his consciousness, he cut his head and offered it to the God for protecting the devotee by suffering injury on his behalf. This incident led Venkatasubbayya to decide to serve God by his songs and dedicate his life. The priest's devotion to God and love to his mistress are the two forces that ended his life. The novel focuses on the 'contest between the priest, the temple singer, and the Chieftain and the contrast between the Brahmin's moral certainty and the insecurity of the Shudra Chieftain.'[22]

Karnad in ***Flowers*** retains the event 'Shivalinga sprouting hair' of the folk story but modifies the characters and the story 'as a conflict between religious devotion and erotic love, under girded by the priest's guilt at his betrayal of his wife.'[23] The whole story is narrated by the priest. The monologue begins with the priest's description about the Scorpio's movements on astrological calculations. The narrator feels assertive and proud about his precise and accurate knowledge of astrology. He says,

> And I know that on this day of the year at this precise moment and I can tell the present moment because Scorpio is stretched out in the eastern sky in all his magnificent glory with lowest point of his curving tail just about to take off from the horizon…I could tell you what star is perched on the brass tip of its pinnacle. For I know every nook and cranny in these grounds. I know where every star will be as the skies revolve through the year. (***Flowers***, 243)[24]

The reader while listening to the narrator's opening lines about a temple tank, stars, Scorpio etc. is taken to the world of astronomy, geography and religion. Next he tells about the place that he is familiar with as a priest of the Shiva Temple. His world, a private universe from which he has never for a moment wanted to step out includes 'temple, tank, rough and grey boulders, flowering shrubs and trees and birds that come and go through the seasons.'(*Fl*, 243) It is a closed, settled and secured place for the narrator. He has lived here all his life without any contact with the outside world except his home. He spends much of his time with 'Linga'. He talks to it, offers prayers, discusses recent political developments, decorates it. The 'Linga' is 'a Plain phallic stump with smooth crown and a rough hewn vulva for the base.' (*Fl*, 244) But because of the priest's daily offerings the 'Linga' developed a smooth slippery surface. It challenges the decorative skill of the priest. As the priest invents new ways of decorating it everyday, much of his time is spent on it. Irritated by this his wife used to say that the 'Linga' is his 'step-wife'. The priest's dedication and involvement in the priesthood brings him recognition from the Chieftain of that region and others including his wife. The Chieftain as a religious man admires the floral skills of the priest and visits the temple every evening for 'dharshan' and 'Prasada'. Everyday, in the evening when the Chieftain starts, the canon sound is heard signaling his arrival. But before he arrives, it is a practice for the priest to decorate the God with flowers and get ready for the 'Pooja' with the incense sticks, camphor, wicks properly arranged. Although the decoration of the 'Linga' takes much time, he loves to do it and he uses almost every variety of flowers such as 'mallige', 'sevanti', 'chendu hoovu', 'sampige', 'kanakambara'.

His routine gets interrupted by the visit of a Courtesan during the Shivaratri celebrations. The week long festivities are attended by large number of people. Obviously, during this period the priest's work is more as he had to crack every coconut the devotees bring and return the halves as 'Prasada' with a flower and sandål paste in it.

He doesn't grumble it as he finds joy in it- 'It is an exhausting task, it prolongs the day and yet I insist on handling every coconut myself. I love doing it for the 'Linga'.' (*Fl*, 245) That day he was returning the coconut halves with the 'Prasada', suddenly his attention fell on the Courtesan and he realized that he loved her. He used to give her 'Prasada' every day. But when the Courtesan didn't come for two days owing to her menstrual period, the priest's urge to meet her took him to her house. This was the only diversion he had from his routine. Once they become familiar it became a habit in him to go to her house with the offerings comprising of flowers and 'Prasada' and spend time with her everyday after the evening prayers. As the Courtesan loved the priest's special skills of decorating the God, she expected him to show her how he used to decorate it. In the absence of the 'Linga' in the house, she offers her body to be decorated. Gradually from such trail decoration there is a shift to eroticism. The three pages long elaborate description of how he decorated her body and how he felt during the whole process speaks of the intensity of his feelings towards her. He returned home only after his visit to the Courtesan. It is because Courtesan satisfied only his sensual desires and not his hunger for food. For food he had to go home and have it with his wife. The news about the new relationship spread in a few days and the people were surprised about it. The priest was not disturbed by such scandal. Yet, he was very much distressed at the pain he was causing his wife. It was a betrayal. He felt ashamed about it. But he was helpless and could not do anything about it. The priest's self was divided into two: one for the Shivalinga and another for the Courtesan, although there was his wife to have her share of him.

The triangular relationship (Karnad's recurring theme) in the reversed form that is a man and two women as in *Yayati* is repeated in the narrative of the priest. It is in fact a departure from the focus of the folk story where the triangle includes the priest (Veeranna), the Chieftain (Palegar) and the singer (Venkatasubbayya).The priest's

relationship with the Courtesan is short lived as his ascetic life gets mixed up with the erotic life. Once, the Chieftain didn't come at the usual hour for the evening prayer. The priest and his wife were ready and waited for long for his arrival. When it was very late, the priest decided to finish the 'Pooja'. It was nearly midnight; there was no chance that the Chieftain would come to the temple. So the priest performed the 'Pooja'. At last he put a flower on his wife's outstretched palm. As she was tucking the flower in to her hair, she looked into his eyes and let her pallu to drop to expose herself before him. The priest was provoked sexually. But he was reminded of the place and when he turned to the 'Linga', the desire faded, the glow went out of the eyes. His wife advised him not to go in the dark for there was danger of poisonous snake and insects. But he told her to go and he would be back later. Then he collected all the flowers and went to his Courtesan.

Though she was sleeping, she got up and received the priest. He told her that the Chieftain did not come and therefore he was late. He then offered her all the flowers. She wished to know what kind of flowers he had brought. After a while she fell asleep. It was at this moment he heard the sound of the canon. He immediately collected all those flowers, pulled those flowers from her hair and started back to the temple. He hurriedly opened the door of the temple and started decorating the 'Linga' with those twice used flowers. By the time the Chieftain arrived, the priest was ready for the 'Pooja'. The priest performed the 'Pooja' and gave 'Prasada' to the Chieftain. In the flowers Chieftain found a long hair and told, 'I didn't know God had long hair.' (*Fl*, 257) The priest to avoid the public shame said, 'If we believe that God has long hair, He will have long hair.' (*Fl*, 257) The Chieftain told him to prove it. The priest asked him time till next new moon day. The Chieftain agreed and went away. The priest, for the next twelve days prayed, pleaded the God to save him. In fact, 'For twelve days, I cleansed my existence of everything, every name or person, except the 'Linga'.' (*Fl*, 258) On the particular day the people gathered, the Chieftain also arrived to see whether God had hair on his head.

When they entered the sanctum, to their surprise the 'Linga' had long silken hair covering it completely. To test whether the hair was glued one of the Brahmins pulled a bunch of hair. The spot from where the Brahmin plucked the hair was bleeding. So the priest proved that the 'Linga' had hair. The Chieftain fell to the priest's feet and asked for forgiveness. This trial brought the priest respect and recognition. Hearing about this the Courtesan left the town and his wife became his slave and guardian. He was raised above the marital and physical life. He was given special honour the 'State Saint'.

The priest, in spite of the new status he won, is not happy with the God whom he had asked the strength to live in disgrace. He feels that he had tainted himself and guilty of deceiving the wife and Courtesan. He doesn't agree with the logic that the God favoured him for his love in spite of his dereliction of duty. He considers such a grace is humiliation. Therefore he feels unworthy of the honour bestowed on him by God. He is not able to live on His terms. Therefore he decides to die. The death wish is suggested in the last line –'I shall do so again now, but not to test my lungs. I shall seek in the narrow confines of that hollow the answers that god has denied me.' (*Fl*, 260) The narrative that began from the present travels to the past and at the end returns to the present.

The narrator, the worship of the 'Linga', the challenge of the Chieftain represent as Jasbir Jain observes 'male principle'. The three places that the priest is connected represent different aspects of his personality. The priest's home includes his wife, two children and aged parents. His family needs his financial support, but it doesn't ensure privacy for him as 'there were our two children and my old parents in the house and you never know who might call out for help.' (*Fl*, 249) But unlike this the Courtesan's house doesn't need his financial support and it gives more freedom and ensures greater privacy. Here, there is both love and devotion. The third place is the temple. It is the sacred place and there is only devotion although the priest's attention is drawn to the Courtesan from here. The triangular conflict forms basis for the denoument of the priest.

The two kinds of worships are – worship of the Shivalinga and the worship of the priest's Courtesan. The act of worship is an elaborate ritual. The priest, after a dip in the holy tank sits in front of the 'Linga' in a wet cloth surrounded by flowers, jaw sticks camphor and arati thalis to perform the ritual. The priest describes the act of worship, 'And in the isolation of this place, I spend most of my time with the 'Linga' – talking to it, singing to it, even discussing recent political development, and most of all, decorating it with flowers, The 'Linga' is not ornately carved like some in the neighbourhood. It is essentially a plain phallic stump with a smooth crown and rough – hewn vulva for the base. Endless ablution of milk and ghee oil through the centuries has managed to give it a slippery surface. So making the flowers stay on it is easy and I have often lost track of the hours devising new ways of covering it with flowers.' (*Fl*, 243, 244) This kind of ceremonial ritual is performed daily. The similar kind of ritual the priest performs at the Courtesan's house. In Courtesan's house the priest doesn't require all the paraphernalia except flowers. Here the living being is worshipped. The difference is that one is spiritual and other is temporal. The priest's journey from the spiritual to the temporal is simple and plain. But his return journey is complicated and challenging because it meant desecration. In other words it is the result of the split in the character of the priest. He is divided between the God and the Courtesan. As priest, it is his bound duty to remain in that space and perform the ritual. As he wandered out of it and behaved according to his desire, he is brought back by the Chieftain. He suffered twelve days ordeal in the service of the God and at last became a saint. The sainthood he got is a relief from the faith of contradictions. Jasbir Jain explains,

> This, while it saves the man from public humiliation and loss of face, deprives his wife of wifehood, and demands from him a single minded devotion to the 'lingam', offering it total control over his mind and body.

> This loss of pleasure and of power is compensated by the new 'Saint hood' conferred on him.[25]

Yet the priest is not able to live as he feels humiliated by the God's condesension. The personal humiliation puts him in grief. His sacrifice at one level is the sacrifice of his desire, and at another level is a sacrifice of life.The nature of faith in the devotee, the nature of the ritual of sacrifice, the nature of marital bondage, the nature of love, and the nature of ideals are dealt in Karnad's plays. For example in ***Bali: The Sacrifice***, the ritual of sacrifice is discussed. The use of animals or birds made up of dough in the place of real ones for sacrifice does not end violence as intended violence and actual violence are same as shown in ***Bali: The sacrifice***. The Queen and an ugly mahout meet in the inner sanctum of a ruined temple. They are discovered by the Queen's rightful husband and his mother. The cock of dough is used for sacrifice as a penance to the Queen's adultery. But the Queen as she is a Jain doesn't agree to it because for her the intended sacrifice is a real sacrifice. The Queen is not allowed to live either the married life or extra marital life. The people blame her for her barren wifehood while living with her husband and when she committed adultery they blame her as an adulterer. The separation between love and procreation is seen as unnatural. When she agrees to the sacrifice of the cock of dough and remains faithful wife the Mahout goes away, the cock of dough crows and the Queen dies. The Queen's end suggests the King's end. The King pays much for his divided faith. He is caught between his wife and his mother and between the image of a devoted wife and that of a harlot. In ***Flowers*** when the priest is demanded to prove, the Courtesan goes away, his wife becomes a slave and counselor and he dies. The priest is caught between Courtesan and his wife. In *Flowers* and ***Bali: The Sacrifice*** the tests do not allow the man-woman relationship to survive and the triangular relationships fail where as in ***Naga Mandala*** it allows and therefore Rani and Appanna live happily with Naga after the snake ordeal.

The genre of the narrative of the ***Flowers*** as suggested in the title itself is a monologue. Unlike the poetic dramatic monologues, ***Flowers*** is a prose monologue. The questions that crop up in mind are: Is the narrative a story? Is it a story to be read aloud? Is it a play in the compressed form? What drama elements are present in it? Does it have scope for stage production? etc. The narrative is indeed a plain story meant for reading. It is a dramatic monologue because one character speaks throughout and where as other characters act and speak silently (physically absent). There are two women characters Ranganayaki and the priest's wife, a few men characters that include the priest, the Chieftain, Brahmins and other devotees. Regarding the dramatic plot of the narrative – the routine of the priest (performing the ritual), the entry of another woman in the priest's life (Courtesan), reversal of the normal action (the Chieftain's late arrival and restoration of the used flowers to the 'Linga'), dislocation and disconnection (Ranganayaki and the 'Linga') and at last the transformation and denouement (priest's 'sainthood' and sacrifice) do make for enacting the narrative in to a play. The visual images such as Scorpio rising from the horizon the elaborate ritual of decorating the 'Linga' and Ranganayaki, Shivarathri Festivities, 'Linga' sprouting hair, the priest's twelve days penance, and the priest's family are all visual images that can be shown on the stage. The dialogue with the listeners and other characters can also be generated. The diction in the narrative has more suggestive meanings. For example words such as 'private universe', 'the cavernous house', 'seclusion', 'names of the flowers and their colours' etc take the readers to their connotative meanings. The incidents in the narrative also have their significant role to play. The incident that occurred on the day the Chieftain found the hair in the 'Prasada' – the priests had put a flower on his wife's outstretched palm. These incidents portend the future tragedy. Considering all these drama elements that are present in the narrative, it becomes clear that the narrative is certainly a monologue, in the compressed dramatic form.

The folk plays of Karnad exemplify the playwright's interest in the past. The folklore and folk theatre figure predominantly in these three plays. But Karnad doesn't use the folk tales or theatrical elements in the original form. He makes a few necessary modifications to make them suitable vehicles to carry his humanistic messages. In ***Hayavadana*** the story of the transposed heads is refined and focused on people who strive to reach the unattainable in a world of tangled relationships. Karnad firmly believes that the past has directions, moral values and messages to the present generations. But because of their remoteness from the present perhaps do not reach the people. Yet when they appear in the modern writings, out of curiosity, they are studied. As they are subjects of study, the writers carefully reshape and modernize them. In this sense all of Karnad's plays that use either myth or history or folk are modern plays. Man's identity crises and the innate desire to evolve into a complete being, the status of women in a male dominated society, and the dichotomy between asceticism and eroticism are discussed in Karnad's folk plays. The ending of the story of Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini in the original is unambiguous. King Vikrama's final solution to the problem of Madana Sundari regarding who her husband was leaves no scope for further discussions. The question related to life outside marriage doesn't arise at all in the folk. But in Mann's version or Karnad's version the story continues and reveals the problem that crop up after the transposition of the heads. Especially in Karnad the problem of identity, an existential problem is focused. *A Story and A Song* and *The Serpant Lover* are the two separate folk tales that Karnad uses in ***Naga-Mandala*** with some modifications. In *A Story and A Song* the story and the song create suspicion in the mind of the husband by transforming into a pair of shoes and a man's coat. The husband's suspicion is cleared by the talk of the Flames in a nearby temple. He learns that the pair of shoes and the coat are nothing but story and the song his wife knew. The original story ends happily in spite of the revenge they took against the woman who had kept them hidden. But the same with some

modifications appear in the play. The story and the song turn into a woman and a sari respectively and create suspicion in the wife. Although in both stories the purpose is to avenge the woman for her attitude the two versions have separate ways of avenging. The story of the old lady of the house is originally *The Serpent Lover*. This is a Separate story added to the first story in the play. In the original story the serpent lover dies. The lady with her son, husband and the maid servant lived happily. Her wish to perform the funeral rites for the dead snake also is fulfilled as her husband agreed to everything she wished for. The story has a clear ending. But in the play the ending is different. The added ending is that Rani rescues the serpent from danger. She allows the serpent to live in her hair. Her husband is completely silenced in the original while in the play he speaks of his miserable condition. But although he speaks he is so helpless and he has to make compromise and live. So by modifying the original folk tales, Karnad reinforces the voice of women in a society where they enjoy the second position. Karnad's humanistic concern is, therefore, seen in revising the past to review the present perceptions about life. In the same way, the plain story of Veeranna in the play gets a philosophical and higher level of interpretation. As Jasbir Jain views, the 'Shivlinga sprouting hair' saves the priest from the public humiliation, but, it deprives his wife of her wifehood and demands the priest to be a devotee to the God. The loss of the materialistic pleasure is compensated by the new 'saint hood' recognition. The priest, in spite of a new position, feels humiliated and wishes to end his life because he thinks God has denied his wish by rescuing him from public shame. The close study of the folk plays explores the fact that Karnad for the contemporary appeal modifies the folklore in his plays.

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Notes

[1] Tutun Mukharjee, 'Of Text and performance: Girish Karnad's Plays' ***Girish Karnad's Palys,*** Ed. Tutun Mukharjee 17.

[2] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 40.

[3] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 40.

[4] Mukharjee, 'Of Text and performance…' 19.

[5] While growing up in Sirsi, a small town in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka, Karnad had opportunities to watch Kannada plays and 'Yakshagana Bayalata' performances. His father used to accompany him to watch Natak companies. But for Yakshagana as it was considered inferior, Karnad used to go with servants. The paraphernalia of these performances have, obviously, gone into the making of Karnad's plays.

[6] Girish Karnad, ***Collected Plays Vol One*** XXIII. (Unlike *Hayavadana*, Karnad has used western structures of drama for his earlier mythical and historical plays. For his *Yayati* 'Strangely though, the form of the play was not influenced by mythological plays. It reflected the western playwrights that I read avidly – Anouilh, Sartre, O'Neill, and the Greeks'. For his *Tughluq* –'I deliberately chose a Natak company form for a historical drama. I tried to use Parsi Natak stagecraft of alternating 'deep' and 'shallow' scenes….'(See Tutun Mukharjee, 'In his own voice – A conversation with Girish Karnad' ***Girish Karnad's Palys,*** Ed. Tutun Mukharjee 31, 36.)

[7] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 40.

[8] M. K. Naik, 'From the Horse's Mouth: A study of ***Hayavadana***'. ***Girish Karnad's Palys,*** Ed. Tutun Mukharjee 137.

[9] Girish Karnad, ***Hayavadana Collected Plays Vol. One,*** 105, 106. (Subsequent references to this play are shown in the text itself).

[10] Savita Goel, 'Folk Theatre Strategies in ***Hayavadana' The Plays of Girish Karnad,*** Ed. Jayadipsingh Dodiya 212.

[11] Nandi Bhatia, Ed. ***Modern Indian Theatre: A Reader*** (New Delhi: OUP 2009) XXI.

[12] M. Sarat Babu, 'The concept of chastity and ***Naga Mandala' The Plays of Girish Karnad,*** Ed. Jayadipsingh Dodiya 238.

[13] Karnad, 'Appendix-1' ***Collected Plays Vol One,*** 313, 314.

[14] M. Sarat Babu, 'The concept of chastity and ***Naga Mandala' The Plays of Girish Karnad,*** Ed. Jayadipsingh Dodiya 238.

[15] Karnad, ***Three Plays*** (New Delhi: OUP, 1994) 16.

[16] Girish Karnad, ***Naga-Mandala Collected Plays Vol*** *One* 247. (Subsequent references to this play are shown in the text itself).

[17] A. K. Ramanujan, ***A Flowering Tree and Other Oral Tales from India*** (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 1997) 1.

[18] 'A story and a song' and The Serpent Lover' are the two stories Karnad heard from R. K Ramanujan. Both stories are collected by R. K. Ramanujan and they are published in the anthology ***A Flowering Tree and other Oral Tales from India.***

[19] Dharwadkar, 'Introduction' ***Collected Plays Vol Two*** XXXI.

[20] Jasbir Jain, '***Flowers***: A Dramatic Monologue: Patriarchal Power and The Nature of Sacrifice' ***Girish Karnad's Palys,*** Ed. Tutun Mukharjee, 346

[21] Jasbir Jain, '***Flowers***: A Dramatic Monologue: Patriarchal Power and The Nature of Sacrifice' 347.

[22] Dharwadkar, 'Introduction' ***Collected Plays Vol Two*** XXXI.

[23] Dharwadkar, 'Introduction' ***Collected Plays Vol Two*** XXX1, XXX11.

[24] Girish Karnad, ***Flowers Collected Plays Vol Two,*** 243. (Subsequent references to this play are shown in the text itself).

[25] Jasbir Jain, '***Flowers***: A Dramatic Monologue: Patriarchal power and The Nature of Sacrifice' 350, 351.

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Chapter-Five

Myth Creation: Karnad's Contemporary Social Plays

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Myth Creation: Contemporary Social plays

Karnad's ***Anju Mallige***, ***Broken Images*** and ***Wedding Album*** are his contemporary social dramas. These plays dramatize social issues such as life of the Indian expatriates in the foreign land, 'the politics of language in the literary culture'[1] and the gradual erasure of the strictly observed rituals of the institution of Indian marriage respectively. Though these plays do not deal with such topics related to myths, history and folklore, they do dramatize plots that are equally relevant and close to the contemporary life. For example, the problem of adjustment of the expatriate Indians in England during 1960's- those who have gone abroad either for higher education or for jobs confront bitter experiences as they live outside their secured homes. Karnad during his stay in England on his Rhodes scholarship keenly observed the intense pressures on the expatriates and the same he deals in ***Anju Mallige***. Karnad occupies a special place among the contemporary dramatists because he himself is a translator of all his major plays and a critic of the nature and context of his dramas. Including the most recent play ***Wedding Album***, Karnad has translated most of his plays from Kannada into English as well as ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan***, ***Flowers*** and ***Broken Images*** from English into Kannada. He is quite at ease with both Kannada and English languages. In a pluralistic linguistic nation, perhaps, Karnad wants to reach wider audience through his transcriptions. A playwright who has won international recognition for his mythical, historical and folk plays radically turns to the language issues in *Broken Image*. Manjula Nayak, the central character in the play a successful writer of short and long fiction in Kannada is suddenly transformed into a popular English novelist of international repute. But, ironically, the play unfolds the fact that she has sent the novel of her dead sister to the international publisher as her own. Karnad focuses on the opportunist Manjula who

has used the novel of her dead sister for her fame. The recent play ***Wedding Album*** deals with the institution of marriage in India in the modern context. Out of thirteen plays, in three plays, Karnad has not employed the ancient narratives. Although Karnad's shift to social dramas is unusual, the defence for such departure lies in the fact that the modern life affected by globalization and information communication technology has no parallel analogies in myths or history or folk. Karnad, in fact, used a hymn from *Rigveda* to suggest the theme of incest in the first edition of ***Anju Mallige***. Except that hymn there is no other reference to any character or episode of the myth. But in the revised edition he has dropped even that hymn.

Anju Mallige

Though ***Anju Mallige*** was published in 1977, the playwright revised the play thoroughly and published again in 1989. The revised edition attracted the attention of critics and artists to a great extent only after the NSD's production in Hindi in 1998. The subject that intrigued Karnad much is the man-woman relationship in its varied forms. Almost all plays explore the various dimensions of this relationship. But, for the interpretation of such relationship Karnad employs the narratives of myth, history and folk in most of his plays, where as he has used a realistic mode in ***Anju Mallige*** and other two plays. In ***Yayati*** the relationship is between Yayati and two women (Devayani and Sharmistha) and in ***Hayavadana*** it is between Padmini and two men (Devadatta and Kapila). But in ***Anju Mallige*** the relationship is between Yamini and three men (Satish, Goutham and David). The strange story of incestuous relationship between a boy and a girl (brother and sister in the play) of the play actually astonished the readers because for the first time in the history of Kannada theatre a subject of this sort is dramatized and no other Indian dramatist had dealt this so for. The sixteen years period after Karnad wrote *Yayati*, in fact, a gestation period for him to choose a contemporary subject for this play, although he justified his disinterest in social dramas in his letter dated 28th March 1965 to

GB Joshi. He wrote that the dramaturgy of the social dramas is more challenging than that of the dramaturgy of historical and mythical plays. It is really hard to be objective towards contemporary life.[2] The playwright, according to Karnad, confronts the problem regarding the dramatic techniques while writing social dramas. Karnad answers the question about the dramaturgy of social dramas in an interview published in ***Taranga*** (16th June 1985): 'While attempting to write such a play, the playwright unconsciously develops a documentary style. In other words he gives a realistic description instead of getting into the heart of the issue. As ours is a nation of surrealism, it is impossible to understand any problem separately. We are yet to develop writings that can depict the reality humorously.'[3]

Karnad chooses a 'non-Indian location'[4] to discuss the life of the Indian expatriates in England. In this play the location is a small flat in a university town in England. It is about a situation that is essentially post-colonial. Maya Pandit analyzing the play states:

> This is a post-colonial play not just because it was written after the Independence, but because it deals with a situation that is essentially post-colonial, namely, the exploration of the condition of exile from the motherland from within, as it were. And also because it has an ambivalence that gets inscribed through a free play of signs such as 'motherland', 'mother', 'child', 'woman', and 'incest'. The power of the play lies in the complex web of alternative perceptions that open up simultaneous ways of 'complex seeing.[5]

The strange and socially abandoned incestuous relationship between Yamini and Satish and its impact on their lives are being discussed in the play. The self-exiled Indians and their circle of English acquaintances are the characters of the play. Satish, who has gone to England for higher education is doing his research in Biology on a scholarship.

His sister Yamini is also in England doing a course in painting. In fact, the incest between them makes them to go to England. Having this incest at the centre, the play explores the issues such as humiliation, jealousy, psychological problems, and death that spring out of this relationship. All through the play the characters are shown as people who are anxious, restless, jealous, and disturbed. Besides, the play throws light on racial conflicts. Karnad's non-Indian setting in the play ensures greater freedom to those people who are away from the family relations reflecting their real characters. In such conditions the different layers of the psyche of such people are revealed.

Yamini, during her childhood, because of her mother's illness and financial crunch in the family, had to shoulder the responsibility of looking after her home. In the big house only Yamini, Satish and their parents lived. Yamini and Satish spent their childhood playing in this big house. Once, as they were playing in the garden in front of the house, it suddenly started raining. Both of them although rushed to the house, they were drenched by the time they reached the house. Yamini changed her dress and lay down in her bed covering herself with a blanket. Satish also came and joined Yamini. There was heavy rain, storm outside. The rainstorms fell on the tiles making lot of sound. Naturally in this condition, Yamini was forced to embrace her brother for warmth. It was a child's play and that continued almost everyday. Yamini enjoyed the company of her brother. She was seventeen years old and her brother was just thirteen years. For four years it was a joyful life for her. But she was upset and sad when she realized that she conceived. It was in this situation her brother brought a doctor and got her aborted. Since then, Satish kept himself away from her. Later he went to England for his higher studies obviously to avoid his sister. Yamini, after three years, went to England to study painting. But, in fact, the memory of the company of her brother took her to England.

The play dramatizes the actions that take place after the arrival of Yamini to England. The play has ten scenes and is set in the living and kitchen rooms of Satish's flat

in the university town in England. Satish, Goutham, Yamini and Julia have gathered in Satish's house for a party. As the play begins, they are seen in the kitchen room talking about Harin's wedding with Petrusia. Karnad has dropped Harin and Petrusia in the latest edition published by Manohara Grantha Mala. In this edition the rest of the characters talk about them. Harin, an Indian turned English loves Petrusia and plans to marry her against her parents' wish. Julia and Yamini admire Harin while Satish and Goutham are a bit critical about him. Goutham, a student of B. Phil degree in Economics, is in love with Yamini. He follows her and tries to please her for her consent for the wedding. He admires Yamini's painting, although the latter admits that her hands are not made for painting. Yamini is jealous of Julia for her soft and beautiful hands. The fact that Julia is Satish's beloved intensifies Yamini's jealousy. Julia feels apprehensive about Susan, who is working in the same laboratory where Satish is working. Yamini's anger and frustration towards herself is expressed before Goutham when he has asked her about the marriage. She describes how a jasmine plant is treated when it doesn't grow flowers. She says that the plant is pulled entirely out of soil and dried in the sun and afterwards it is planted. Only then out of fear it grows flowers. She becomes restless in Goutham's company. She doesn't even say whether she is willing to accompany Goutham for watching a film. In their talk about India Goutham and Satish do not share the same opinion about India. For Goutham India is governed by bureaucracy and is fully corrupted, but Satish feels guilty that when the Nation needs persons like him it is wrong to stay in England. In the second scene, in Satish's flat Yamini receives him when he has returned home in the evening. She accuses him for coming late and like a mother prepares 'dosa' (snacks) and serves him. He expresses his irritation when he is forced to eat 'dosa'. He learns that she has called Gardiner, Satish's guide at the laboratory and enquired about him. He angrily shouts at her when she said that he would also win Noble Prize. As Satish reads the parents' letter, Yamini tells him that Harin secretly meets Petrusia in spite of the vigilance

of an appointed mistress. Yamini has, in fact, thrown away Satish's old shirt and bought him a new one. Satish angrily throws away the parcel and advises her to return to India instead of wasting parents' money when she is not interested in painting. Yamini thinks that it is not a waste of money because when she was young her parents had not spent for her education. She stayed at home to look after the household chores. She feels that it is justifiable when at least now her father is sending money for her. At this moment Julia comes to Satish's home, accuses him for visiting Susan's room the previous day and leaves immediately in anger. Satish is disappointed and moves to his bed room while Yamini calls Goutham to inform him that she is not able to accompany him for the film that evening.

In the third scene the plot gets more complicated as Yamini becomes more and more psychologically disturbed due the growing intimate relationship between Satish and Julia. Satish has been in a sad state for the last three days after the disappearance of Julia. Meanwhile Yamini meets Satish and tells him about the accident Julia met with and her suicide attempt two years ago. Then she tells him about her psychological disturbance. She experiences that somebody is trying to talk to her. She says that two days ago when she heard the voice, she tried to speak. As she narrates, she suddenly faints. Satish advises her that her headache will go only when she is free of tensions. After she recovers she takes little money from Satish and goes to the market to buy them some grocery. Surprisingly, at this moment Julia returns by David Kirkwood's taxi. Satish feels happy and proposes to celebrate the week end. By now Yamini comes back with grocery items and learns that Satish and Julia are going out for the week end. She talks to David Kirkwood, who expresses his anger against Julia and Satish rudely. After Satish and Julia leave, Yamini cooks food for her and David whom she has asked to stay back for lunch. She takes much interest in him in her helpless state. The long dialogue between them

reveals that David is a fascist and hater of non-English yet finds a place in Yamini's life. Later like Satish and Julia, Yamini and David go out together for the week end.

Yamini and David after two days' tour return and they are excited. It is a thrilling experience to Yamini to be in the strange company of David. She imagines as if she is Cleopatra and David is Mark Antony sailing by a ship. After a while, David leaves her and she is so tired that she falls on the sofa. Yamini, now refuses even to receive the phone call, instead she goes to the kitchen to warm up the meals. By this time Satish and Julia also return from their weak end. They share their experience with Yamini. Yamini too shares her experience with them. Satish is astonished to know about her friendship with David who is a fascist and riotous man carrying fighting weapons with him in his truck. Goutham, now, enters the flat with the news that he got a job offer from the World Bank. He invites all of them to the Winter Ball to be held in December at his Institute to celebrate the occasion. Yamini accepts the invitation where as Satish and Julia on account of Julia's birth day refuse. Yamini, although has prepared meals and set the table for them, doesn't join them due to her headache, and leaves soon and later calls Goutham to tell him that she cannot come to supper. Goutham is really hurt by her strange behaviour.

In the beginning of the scene Julia and Satish are seen. They are getting ready to go out for the birth day celebration. Meanwhile Yamini comes and greets Julia with a birthday gift. She has also bought a tie as a gift to Satish on this occasion. She reveals now that she has planned to go to a film with David, although she had promised Goutham that she would accompany him for the Winter Ball at his Institute. Satish is shocked and upset about Yamini's decision. He tells her not to humiliate Goutham by refusing to go with him. She agrees to what Satish said but fails to convince David when he comes to take her to the film. When he tries to take her with him to the film Satish comes and tries to prevent him. David hits angrily him on the face. It is only when Julia threatens to call police David leaves. Yamini in this situation admits that it was her fault and forcibly

sends Satish and Julia to celebrate the birth day. After they leave Yamini who is mentally disturbed takes out a blade from her hand bag and cuts the painting that was hung up on the wall. With Goutham's entry the scene ends.

In the next scene the doctor arrives and advises Satish and Julia to take Yamini to Radcliff for the treatment of her nervous breakdown. As they plan to take her by a taxi, she suddenly gets up and tells them that she will go only with David. Satish contacts David and requests him to come to take Yamini to the hospital. Satish is humiliated and only after he repeated what David said he agrees to come. Soon David arrives and takes her and others follow them. The seventh scene is a short scene in which Satish and Julia are seen as much disturbed by Yamini's illness. In their frightened state Julia asks Satish to inform his parents about Yamini's illness. She tells about her bitter experience two years ago. She says that she was about to marry a boy with whom she had intimate relationship for about a year. It was only eight days before the marriage she knew that the boy had contacts with prostitutes and other women. She was terribly upset and decided to commit suicide by consuming sleeping tablets. She says that the memory of her past makes her very much frightened now. Satish understands the seriousness of the situation and decides to get married soon.

Satish and Julia are married now. In the eighth scene Goutham and Julia appear. Julia tells Goutham about what happened on the day of Harin's marriage. The marriage, in fact did not take place as both Harin and Petrusia came to Satish's flat on the advice of the relatives. They had said that it was wrong to marry secretly. They wanted them to inform the parents and then marry. Petrusia was convinced and did not want to marry that day. All of them had a party in the flat itself. Mean while the priest contacted the bride and groom and he was so impressed that he himself took the responsibility of informing Petrusia's parents. The wedding is going to be held on the coming Friday. By now Yamini is discharged from the hospital and has come back. Goutham has decided to leave

the course half way through and return to India in two days. He is changed in his view about India now. The next long dialogue between Yamini and Julia is important as she tells about her childhood days. She shows Julia the photograph of her Indian house. She tells that there was incest between her and her brother and the memory of it brought her to England. But here Satish was changed and had girl friends. This caused in her contempt. She also tells how she exploited Goutham when her brother was with his girl friend. The whole of this year she had to sleep alone in the memory of Satish while he was sleeping with Julia. Yamini now discloses that she had conceived when she was twenty one years old and her brother got it aborted and when she needed him he had left her. When Julia finds it too much to bear, she runs away and tries to commit suicide.

The ninth scene is a tragic scene because Yamini dies here. Yamini is in the intense nervous state when she receives a call from the police from whom she learns that Julia tried to commit suicide in the lodging and now she has been admitted to a Nursing Home and is out of danger. Having heard about this, Satish immediately rushes to the hospital. But Yamini stops him and tells that she has told Julia about their incestuous relationship at home in India. After Satish leaves for the hospital Yamini, who is alone in the flat takes the blade out of her hand bag and cuts the vein at the wrist and dies. The last scene of the play shows Satish's memory of the past and Julia's enlightenment about life. In the beginning of the scene Julia gets a call and learns that Harin and Petrusia are married and they are in Petrusia's house. Satish and Julia are happy that in spite of all hurdles, Harin and Petrusia are settled happily. Presently Julia shows Satish the photograph Yamini gave her before her death. Satish is reminded of his childhood days and tells her that he had already told her about the house and he was just five years old when his father sold it. Julia, although tried to disbelieve Yamini's words, every word she uttered caught her as spider web catches an insect. She tells that Yamini loved Satish like any girl would do. In order to live with Satish she created a make believe world by

inventing false hood. But, in the process she victimized Julia. Fortunately Julia survived and now she is grateful to Yamini for the lesson she taught her. The play ends when the enlightened Satish and Julia are ready to begin their married life by keeping aside their memory of the past.

The play isn't a simple play about the incestuous relationship between the brother and sister. The play, according to Maya Pandit, discusses 'a situation that is essentially post- colonial'[6], and in fact, represents the new generation of Indians living abroad and grappling with issues of adjustment and assimilation in a foreign culture. Karnad's response to the relevance of the play is:

> I wrote ***Anju Mallige*** in the eighties and it was performed in Kannada with Arundhati Nag playing the role of Yamini. The context of the play is the 1960s decade in England that witnessed the rise of fascist and national socialist elements in the English society. It is a sort of looking back at the England that I'd seen and the people I'd met. Many Indian students were coming to England and there was no community of their own yet in the foreign land. They faced the problems of adjustment and assimilation.[7]

So, at one level the play deals with the difficulties and tensions of non- resident Indians in England during 1960s and at a deeper level delineates the strange and mysterious world of desires that forces them to leave India. Karnad's use of Kannada and English (English in the translation version) is significant for the fact that it expresses the life of the people in exile. The colonialists imposed English upon the natives and either the same language or Kannada a regional language is deployed as a weapon to break free from the oppression. Besides, the oppressed or the outsider who are expatriates in England has to master that language to adapt themselves into that alien culture for a greater acceptance. But during the process of adjustment by learning the alien language and imbibing their culture the native language and the native culture get erased. Harin,

Goutham and Satish are better accepted in the English society for their mannerism and ability to use English language like English people. But Karnad's interest is to discuss not the life of the people who wish to return but the life of those who do not wish to come back. Analyzing the play's focus in the exploration of the condition of the expatriate Indians, Maya Pandit lists the questions that arise in the mind of the readers – Why don't they wish to go back to their country? What keeps them back in England? How do they perceive the country of their oppressors? What is their relationship with the country of their origin? What does the motherland signify for them? If staying in England is an escape from something, what is it that they are afraid of? [8] The play seems to throw light on these subtle issues arising out of exile. The desires and memories of the expatriates get erased and, of course, are reconstructed in the course of time. For example Goutham in the beginning considers the motherland, as a country of 'bureaucracy' and 'corruption'. He thinks that 'Nehru's India requires engineers and mechanics and not scientists who ask salary for their thinking.' (***Anju Mallige***, 274)[9] He decides to be away from India, but when he fails in his plan, he drops his ideas and returns to India as 'foreign returned'. In the case of Satish, it seems for some mysterious reasons he wishes to be away from the motherland, in spite of his distancing himself from India, he wants his beloved Julia to learn about India before she marries him and he wants his sister Yemini to go back to India in order to look after her ageing parents. He knows that it is wrong to stay in England when India needs him. But he doesn't go. There is contradiction in his thought about India.

In one sense the play delineates the brother-sister relationship in Satish and Yamini. Satish is a scientist and works in a Biology laboratory in a university. His sister also arrives to England to do a course in painting. On the surface they are typical Indian brother and sister. Satish is a typical Indian 'male-patriarch' depending upon his sister for his domestic chores. As a male he scolds her for not attending classes and interfering in

his business. He dislikes Yamini's movements with David. Satish represents concern, care, dependency, and dominant Indian male. Yamini is a typical Indian sister who loves her brother and sacrifices herself caring him. She cooks for him, takes care of his physical being, destroys his frayed and old shirt and buys new ones. When he is late in the evening, she rings up to his office to enquire about him. But the same brother and sister appear binary oppositions. Satish keeps telling her to go back to India to look after the parents although it is the duty of the male child in the Indian family. Ironically, Satish expects his sister to be responsible and fulfill the family expectations. He abhors her company and, surprisingly the brother and sister are living separately. In Yamini's case, although she is like a true sister and protective like mother, irritates her brother by her unnecessary interference. The relationship at a more subtle level displays another kind of relationship. Satish wants to protect himself and live in England, and yet wants connections with his motherland. He wants Julia to know about India before getting married to her. His love and hate towards his sister and India makes one to ask whether his relationship is genuine or a façade. His efforts to escape from Yamini's domination when she interferes in his life, especially in his marriage with Julia and Yamini's efforts to discourage Julia from getting close to Satish show their struggles in their relationship. Satish and Yamini do not remain as mere brother and sister. Satish is portrayed as a selfish male trying to keep her tied to her country so that he will be free. While Yamini is portrayed as scheming and possessive sister trying to keep her brother tied to her and her country so that there is no danger to their life. The memory of the country, family, and community is more intense in Yamini than in Satish.

Karnad also deals with another dimension of brother-sister relationship in the light of incest. Yamini cannot tolerate Satish- Julia relationship. She pleads Goutham to take her to her room when she sees Satish and Julia leaving together. This reflects that she is not just a caring and loving sister, instead, she is a jealous and selfish lover. That's why

she poisons Julia's mind by telling her about Satish's girl friends and also dissuades Satish through her recounting of Julia's past boy-friend. In order to prevent Julia from her friendship with Satish she tells her of her incestuous relation with her brother. If she represents India, India means to Satish a disease and he tries to distance himself from that disease and, perhaps, that justifies the self-exile. For the complete adaptation in the alien land, it is necessary to be cut off his roots of his family, community and the nation. He forges his relationship to be assimilated in the foreign land. At the end of the play, Karnad seems suggesting that he can begin his new life with Julia in England only by that enlightenment that his wife is a white girl and the land is England. But in Yamini's case it is different. Yamini, more and more disturbed due to the friendship between Satish and Julia, to save herself from the intense misery she makes friendship with David. But this friendship brings her humiliation and torture. Yamini's inability to marry Goutham or to support Satish's wish to marry Julia is owing to her incestuous childhood. Her care, love and desire to be with Satish are predominantly shown in the play. For instance, when David hurts Satish Yamini goes near and says, 'Oh, god! How are you Satish? Is it paining? He, a monster! Bastard! It is my fault; please pardon me.'(*AM*, 323) She breaks down when her brother goes away with Julia. She even reveals to Julia the secret of her relationship with her brother. So, it becomes clear that the happy childhood days of Satish and Yamini has been ridden with incestuous passions. Satish comes to England to escape from his guilt ridden past. Satish as a child was innocent and when the unwanted happened he felt guilty. Yamini comes to England to prevent her brother slipping out of her hold on him. But here Satish wants her to return to India to take care of her parents.

There is yet another set of meanings at the end of the play. Satish explains that what Yamini said is false as the house was sold when he was just five. However, it can be seen as a figment of Yamini's illness. If it was a cooked up story, why should Satish get shocked when he sees at the 'Sari' Julia is wearing,a gift from Yamini. Julia's

enlightenment in her shock at the sight of Satish over her Sari is that she needs to get re-rooted in her own land. Whether Satish is also enlightened like Julia is the question left to the readers. The questions that arise now are about the focus of the play. Is it Satish, who decides and marries Julia in the midst of the pathetic state of his sister? Or is it Yamini who commits suicide at the end? Or both of them? Karnad's focus is to reveal the Indian society in comparison with the English society. The rigid social taboos of Indian society are shown in the foreign land for a better understanding. The brother-sister relation for marital life is forbidden in the Indian society while the same is seen as normal in the western society at the end of the play. Julia pardons Yamini and wants to understand who they are before they start their married life. While concluding the analysis of the play, Maya Pandit states, 'considering the dearth of plays that address such issues strictly and frankly, it is amazing that Karnad's daring attempt to fuse the theme of incest and nation so inextricably should have gone unnoticed for so long on the Indian stage.'[10]

Broken Images

Broken Images is yet another contemporary social drama written by Karnad. The speciality of this drama is that it is a one act, one character, and one hour long play in the monologue style. In structure and the dramaturgy it is similar to *Flowers*. Both are monologues and each has one focused character. Karnad admits that *Flowers* is a companion piece for *Broken Images*. He says, 'I thought of it as a companion piece for *Bimba*. In that play a woman is unraveling the knots of her psyche; here is a man undertaking a journey'[11] As Karnad says that the idea of this play occurred to him while he was listening to a speech by Shashi Deshpande, an Indian English novelist on the problems of the writers of regional literature. The play had 'Macaulay's children' as the first title, but Karnad replaced it with 'Broken Images' a phrase from T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches glow

Out of this story rubbish? Son of man,

You cannot say, or guess, for you know only

A heap of *broken images*, where the sun beats,

And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief

And the dry stone no sound of water. Only

There is shadow under this red rock, [12]

Commenting on the play, Tutun Mukharjee states, 'Through the title of his play, Karnad seems to be pointing towards a similar (***The Waste Land's***) socio-psychological breakdown in human communication and relationships in the face of overpowering ambition and greed.'[13] It is true that Karnad articulates the modern life in its deteriorated state, but, while doing so, he is compelled to use technology because he is exposed to TV besides theatre. Karnad explains the technology compulsions: 'When I returned to Bangalore in early 2004, I realized the extent to which technology pervaded and affected our lives. To me technology wasn't depressing at all. This was the age of the image. We needed to understand its aesthetics and use it.'[14] The use of T.V. studio as performance space and the T.V. image as a character in the play, are brilliant new ideas of Karnad. It is in this context, the play is examined to understand whether Karnad continues his study of human psyche in terms of themes of earlier plays and invents new dramaturgical techniques.

Of ***Flowers*** and ***Broken Images*** only *Broken Images* has been produced because it is in the dramatic narrative form. But *Flowers* is an eighteen pages prose narrative in the first person. The play basically has two subjects -first, the politics of language- regional or English; second, the divided persona of an individual and their relations. In the beginning, Manjula Nayak, the only human character of the play walks in from the right of the stage that is set for video-shooting. The setting of the stage gives the view of the interior of a television studio of Shree T.V. Channel. 'A big plasma screen hangs on one

side, big enough for a close – up on it to be seen clearly by the audience. On the other side of the stage, a chair and a typically 'telly' table strong, wide, semi-circular. At the back of the stage are several television sets, with screens of varying sizes. A small red bulb glows above the table, high enough not appear on the television screen.'(***Broken Images***, 261)[17] Manjula is in her mid thirties or forties. Her confident walk shows that she has already been exposed to studio. She is wearing a lapel mike. She comments on the Indian television studios as cluttered set up with elephantine lights, headphones, cameras and people scurrying about shouting orders. But for her surprise the present studio is just 'Spartan' just like in abroad. She gets ready for the transmission to start with the initial voice tests in the mike. The announcer gives a brief introduction about Ms Manjula Nayak: she was a renowned Kannada short-story writer and until a year ago a lecturer in English in Bangalore. A year ago she wrote an English novel entitled *The River Has No Memories* and that brought her international name and fame with the Best Woman Writer award of the year. The announcer welcomes her for an address of about ten minutes. Soon Manjula with her prepared speech in the note cards begins with greetings 'Namaskara'. She introduces herself as Manjula Murthy though her 'creative self' would continue to be Manjula Nayak. She answers two questions that arise in the minds of the people. The first question she answers is why she chose to write in English after having written in Kannada all her life. Her reply is that it just 'burst out in English.' She is blamed for her betrayal of Kannada and writing for foreign readers. She defends her choice of language and quotes the words of admiration from the British publishers: 'We like your book because it's so Indian. We receive any number of manuscripts from India but they are all written with the western reader in view. Your novel has the genuine Indian feel.'(*BI*, 264) She talks about what a Pandit and the president of central Sahitya Akademi said about those who write in English. According to them those who write in English are dishonest and they write for money. She counter argues and justifies that she writes in English for money. She has

earned nothing writing in Kannada. She quotes a Kannada proverb: 'A response is good. But a meaningful response is better' and explains 'Meaningful is Artha – which also means money!' (*BI*, 265) The second question is about how she could write a book vividly and empathetically on the life of a person confined to a wheel chair all her life. She expresses her gratitude to her sister Malini who was confined to the wheel chair owing to her suffering from meningomyelocele. She says Malini is the 'Only character in the novel drawn from life' and other characters are invented including the plot. She generously acknowledges the support she received from her husband, Pramod Murthy while writing the novel. Her long speech of defence to the non- participatory invisible television viewers lasts for ten minutes with a formal end note –

> Well that's it I have committed the cardinal sin of writing in English.
>
> [Laughs]
>
> There is no *Prayaschitha* for it, no absolution. But fortunately the film you are about to see is in Kannada. That makes me very happy…The Kannada reality I conceived in English - to Perfection - by the Director. I couldn't have done better. My thanks to the cast and the crew and, of course, Shree - TV. Well enjoy the tele film. Good Night, Namaskara.' (*BI*, 268)

She feels relieved from the intense pressure of being in the studio and gets up to leave. But then her Image remains on the screen and calls her back. In fact, the Image should have gone off for the Kannada film to commence. Instead, it comes alive and when Manjula notices it calling her she is startled. It is from this point onwards the Image like a character initiates the dialogue and through its continuous probe into Manjula's psyche makes Manjula to reveal the truth. The Image congratulates Manjula for her success and

reminds her of Malini- 'If one had to comment…in the extreme case that one had to … that bit about your sister Malini…the tears…. That could have been played down.' (*BI*, 268) Further, when the Image refers to the close bond between Manjula and Malini, Manjula accepts that her sister was superior. She says, 'The novel doesn't really do her justice. She was attractive than me. Intelligent -more intelligent than me. And vivacious, which I never was. I accepted that she radiated life from the wheel chair to which she was confined. I have always been reconciled to being the second best.' (*BI*, 269) She is compelled to speak her jealousy and anger for her sister's attractive and delicate looks and for the friendship she developed with her husband. Her sister was the favourite daughter of her parents. She was intelligent and was quite at ease with English. All subjects she read for herself, except English and Mathematics for which a teacher used to come home to teach. Manjula wonders if she would have been as bright as her sister if she had received all that love and affection from parents and teachers. Manjula soon after her education joined a college as a lecturer while Malini lived with her parents in Koramangala. Soon she met Pramod Murthy and married and settled in Jayanagar. She was writing short stories in Kannada. When asked about her choice of English for creative writing she says, 'Actually, I have never said it publicly, but if you argue that a novel written in English cannot express truth about India because we do not express ourselves in English…. she breathed, laughed, dreamt in English. Her friends spoke only English…' (*BI*, 271) Manjula admits that she learnt English while living with Malini for six years. Further probes into the psyche of Manjula, lead her to reveal more truths. Manjula admits that her sister and her husband were very close to each other. She used to call her husband 'a two- women man' and 'Tirupati Thimmappa'. Several times during their dialogue Manjula shouts at the Image with her helpless anger for interrogating her. However, she continues explaining every bit of secret that she had not hitherto shared with anybody. She says that Pramod extended invitation to her friend Lucy for dinner in

expensive restaurants but declines the possibility of an affair. However, she wished that he had 'a full- scale affair with her- with anyone, in fact that might have eased the tension in the house.' (*BI*, 277) Asked about Malini's closeness with Pramod, though she declines the possibility of any physical intimacy, she, in fact, out of suspicion, secretly visited their room. She admits that she suspected their relationship. Then the Image interrogates whether Malini knew about the book that she was writing. Manjula answers negatively as she did not write before Malini's death and she did not have time to write English novel because of her professional chores. But the Image wonders how she wrote the novel of three hundred and fifty printed material with in two weeks. Here she is compelled to make the confession that she did not write the novel, instead, it was written by her sister. After her death, she found the typed script in the drawer and sent it to the literary agent who took Manjula for Malini as Malini used to sign M. Nayak. The Image at the end claps for all the self revelation made by Manjula. Manjula got the novel published in her name and earned huge royalty. Finally, when the Image makes Manjula realize the possibility of being exposed to the society and the victory of her dead sister, she rushes to the screen and looks for cable to disconnect. Meanwhile, her body synchronizes with the words of the Image and becomes an extension of the Image. The Image recites that she is Malini Nayak, the English novelist Manjula Nayak, the Kannada short-story writer, was decimated the moment she read her novel. Further she says that Manjula obliterated all differences of ink and blood and language between them and at one full stroke morphed into her. At last she declares that although she was, in truth, Malini Nayak, the genius of a sister who loved her husband and knew Kannada and wrote in English, she would continue in the name of Manjula Nayak because as Manjula Nayak she has been invited as a visiting professor to different American universities and would use the same nomenclature for her passport, her bank accounts, property and investments.She says, actually she is Malini Nayak, her sister who loved her sister's

husband, who knew Kannada, who wrote the best seller in English. Discussing the issues of the play, Sudhir K Arora writes,

> 'The story of Manjula Nayak raises many debatable issues – of language, of traditionalism versus globalization, of the glamour, of material over spiritual, of justification of the plagiarism, of sibling rivalry, of manipulation of worldly mathematics and of the technology in the life of man. These issues are certainly challenges to the established ethics. The ethics is a must for leading a peaceful life but in the monologue it is thrown into dustbin in favour of leading a life – Machiavellian type – of excitement, full of name and fame?[16]

The issue of language finds a prominent place in the play. In the post-colonial India, the regional and indigenous languages have been pleaded as a strategy to re root into the Indian culture and strengthen Indianness. But as the place of English has been one of the Indian languages, the language controversy gets more complicated and the same has been contested in *Broken Images*. Karnad respects Kannada language and writes plays in it but he has translated his texts into English. As he has Indianized English, he occupies 'a special place in the language debate by virtue of writing originally in Kannada as well as in English, and in translating from one language into another.'[17] The blame on Manjula is that she betrayed Kannada by writing in English because Indian writers consider that English is 'a medium of dishonesty.' In the era of globalization, she justifies that English language brings her money unlike Kannada as it gets a meaningful response – to mean Arthapoorna- that response in terms of money, fame, publicity, glamour and power. She is proud that she is a Kannada writer herself, born to the language and civilization; and the Kannada reality she conceived in English (English novel that deals a Kannada reality) has been translated back into Kannada. But Manjula turns out to be dishonest not only to

Kannada but also to English. She got her sister's novel published in her name, while in reality she is a Kannada short-story writer.

The playwright's reaction to the general grievance over attrition of regional language due to globalization seems appropriate in the present context. He observes,

> Globalization has opened up certain job sectors for which English is in demand. One must not forget the fact that English was learnt by the Indians during colonialism also for the purpose of getting jobs. So learning a language for entry into the job market is a practical step. Globalizing may be displacing regional languages but only in their written and read forms. But the opening up of the skies has given tremendous impetus to the proliferation of regional languages and the regional channels now occupy more space. The programmes are watched and the image speaks to more number of people-in the language of technology. The visual mode actually continues the tradition of performance which has never lacked a regional spectatorship. This is the cheerful aspect about what's happening. What may be getting lost is the written tradition. That was anyway unavailable to large sections of our populace; where as they always had an attachment for the tradition of performance, which continues through television and films. Most of these spectators owe no loyalty to the written language of the region. Earlier one learnt to read and write in a language to get a job; one would now learn English to get a job. Those who moan the death of the regional language have been associated with the reading and writing tradition of the language, the so called upper classes; not the general people. Even when regional language in its written form dies, the performative tradition will breathe new life into spoken forms.[18]

The debate on language is raised, and left to the readers to conclude on. Karnad, in spite of the clear stand regarding the use of language, he leaves the issue at one point and proceeds through his novel dramaturgy i.e. the doppelganger to delve deep into the psyche of the character.

The monologue ***Broken Images*** is not a full length play with a mythical narrative. Karnad has employed technology for the first time in this play as he realized the importance of it in the cyber age. The greatest achievement is that Karnad, by using technologically created electronic image as a character interrogates into inner psyche of the central character. The humanized technology in the form of an image is used to explore the hidden layers of Manjula's mind. In one sense, the image in *Broken Images* is the inner conscience that interrogates the integrity of Manjula's writing and other issues. The Image breaks the posed image that Manjula has established through the novel of her sister. Therefore, Karnad's dramaturgy in the play is the advanced technology myth in the form of the electronic machine that creates a doppelganger to probe. However challenging is the attempt, quite certainly, he is believed to be successful in dramatizing the issue on the stage. As usual, the dramatist has humanized the technology like the humanized mythical or historical character in his other plays.

Wedding Album

The ***Wedding Album***, like *Broken Images*, Karnad's latest contemporary play, explores the traditional institution of marriage in the technologically advanced India in the backdrop of Globalization. The play discusses the subject of marriage at two different levels-first, marriage as a happy event as all the family members come together for celebration, and second, an occasion to see restlessness, anxiety, suspicion, frustrations, aggression, confusions, fights etc, beneath happy smiles. For every play that Karnad wrote, there is a corresponding reality that inspired him to write. For instance, Karnad's *Yayati* was written while he was preparing for the trip to England on a scholarship,

'amidst the intense emotional turmoil.' [19] In the same way, the inspiration behind this play was the proposed wedding of his aunt. Karnad shares this occasion in a literary discussion with Prasanna and Ananthmurthy:

> My new proposed play is about my own community. The marriage of my aunt was about take place twenty years ago. The America returned groom was educated like the members in my family. There was no difficulty at all; even, no demand for dowry yet the wedding did not take place. A tense atmosphere is created the moment the idea of wedding occurs in mind - a restless and noisy atmosphere. Small things such as some were not served tea, the intervention of suspicion become big issues. I intend to write on this. What you said is true. We should break out once, out of our shell.[20]

So Karnad by his contemporary theme, once again, disproves his earlier inhibition about writing contemporary plays. In his note to the play he refers to how he used to counter argue to the comments of GB Joshi about him. But after he wrote ***Wedding Album***, he felt grateful that this play would certainly satisfy him if he was alive.

The title of the play ***Wedding Album*** literally means a book in which a collection of photographs of the wedding are kept. But in the play, instead of photographs, the playwright has presented 'true pictures' of those people who involve in the marriage ceremony. In other words, like a collage or a montage, the incidents and the issues concerning marriage are pooled together to make a meaningful and artistic album like text. The man-woman relationships before and after the marriage in Indian families belonging to different generations have been subjected to explore through the institution of Indian marriage in the play. Besides play's focus on the problems regarding the wedding of Vidula and Ashwin Panje and Rohit and Tapasya, it dramatizes the problems in marriages of Vidula's mother and father and Hema and Chandrakanth. The play also throws light on the licentious relationship of Vidula's mother with Ramadas Nadakarni,

Yamuna with a Trader, Vivan with Hema, Rohit with Isabel and Vidula with her virtual lover. The album completes with another picture of the inter- religious wedding of Pratibha and Irfan. The artistically woven plot of the Vidula's wedding is presented in nine scenes. The first and fifth scenes take place in the Software Production Centre and the sixth scene is set in the Internet Café. But the second, third, fourth, seventh and ninth are set in the living and kitchen rooms of an urban middle class home in Dharwad (Nadakarni Family home) while the eighth scene is set in a restaurant. The playwright has very cautiously arranged the scenes to avoid the complexity of the plot. Although the actions take place in the kitchen room and are not seen but heard. The fifth scene takes the readers two years forward and thereby breaks the suspense of the plot by revealing about Rohit and Tapasya's marriage, Radhabai's life after the death of Vidhula's parents, the married life of Vidula and Ashwin Panje and Rohit's affair with Isabel. The play has totally sixteen characters.

The play opens with a video clipping on a screen in which Vidula is seen in close-up, speaking directly to the camera. She is extremely self-conscious and ill-at-ease. Rohit, Vidula's brother is handling the camera. He is not seen, only his voice is heard. Vidula's video of self introduction was shot to be sent to the man in America whom Vidula is going to marry. In spite of Rohit's instructions to Vidula to appear attractive and impressive she seemed straight forward and casual. As the tape ends Rohit and Pratibha are seen discussing whether the subject of Vidula's marriage for the tele-serial is good enough to be used. For Pratibha, the story doesn't work. She wants to have a look at the other episode on Radhabai which they have planned. The scene doesn't continue here, instead it continues in the fifth scene. The second scene that takes place in the house of Vidula shows the preparation of the family for Vidula's wedding. The scene opens with the tired expression, 'I am so tired' or ' Time just won't move' of Vidula's doctor father while Vidula and her mother are selecting 'saris' to be given to the relatives on the

occasion of the marriage, a practice in Hindu society. Vidula's marriage with Ashwin Panje, an Indian settled in America is almost settled through the media such as internet and mobile, although they are yet to meet personally for their consent for the wedding. In spite of the uncertainty of the marriage, the arrangements like buying of dresses, booking of wedding Hall, getting passport and visa are being seriously taken up by the family members that includes Vidula, her brother Rohit, her sister Hema, her parents and of course the servant Radhabai. During the selection of saris, Vidula's elder sister Hema shows disinterest as she is reminded of her simple marriage fifteen years ago with Chandrakanth, an Indian settled in Australia. She, in fact, expected a grand marriage and may be even dowry. As the action of the play progresses the play unfolds the story of the family gradually. Vidula's father and uncle Ramadas were brought up in poverty. They suffered much during their childhood and they wouldn't have got education, if they hadn't got study scholarship of the Saraswath Society. But, although their condition was improved over the years, when Hema got married, the father arranged a simple marriage for the fact that he did not want to spend money for the marriage and moreover, Chandrakanth, Hema's husband did not demand anything. Now, Hema with her husband and grown up children – a boy and a girl is settled in Australia. The scene probes into the question whether Hema and Chandrakanth are really happy now. Vivan, a neighbour infatuated towards Hema. His infatuation with Hema, who is as old as his mother and her acceptance, reveals that Hema's life with Chandrakanth is not going really well. The discussion on the birth certificate in which, in the place of the name of Vidula's father, there is Ramadas Nadakarni's name (Vidula's uncle), is suggestive of a possible relationship between Ramadas and Vidula's mother. This fact is reinforced by Hema's words 'She was very good looking' and mother's words – 'If left things as they are'. (***Wedding Album***, 51, 54)[21] The quarrel between Radhabai and mother arouses curiosity about Radhabai's background. In the fourth scene more light is thrown on the characters

of Radhabai and her daughter. The mother's anger against Radhabai and her preference for a male servant like the one she had before (called Nagappa) take the readers to another layer of meaning in the life of Hema and Vidula that Nagappa used to exploit their innocence. Rohit's entry with two emails leads them to discuss more seriously about the proposed marriage and other family matters. When they learn that Ashwin Panje has postponed the date of his visit by four days, they become worried and anxious as there won't be enough days left for the preparation. The mother and Hema are not happy with this proposal. Hema says, 'My god, Rohit, This is twenty first century. And we are ourselves educated. And how did we accept such a ludicrous arrangement. You even didn't bother to ring me before you agreed to this. I was informed at the tail end, like an outsider. I would have said let's not…' (*WA*, 25) The mother thinks of rejecting this proposal. But Rohit and Vidula, for the fear of public humiliation do not wish to reject it. As they express their irritation, discontent, Hema tells that her marriage was hurriedly arranged owing to the relation she had with Chandrakanth before marriage. The scene also reveals about Vidula's life in the Internet café, Hattangadi couple's plan to visit Vidula's home, Rohit and Isabel affair and Hema's anxiety about her grown up son Ketan. The whole discussion that takes place in this scene, although focused on marriage, throws light on matters concerning the family and their relationships. The statement made by Vidula's father that 'Marriage is a gamble' seems appropriate in the context of Vidula's family.

The third scene with its focus on Rohit explores at a deeper level the anxiety of the parents of the girl children, and Vidula's uncle Ramadas's character. The Sirur couple-Gopal and Vatsala with Mohan Hattangadi and Meera are seen talking to Rohit and his father. Obviously the Sirur couple proposes their daughter Tapasya, an M.A. in Sociology to Rohit. In spite of Rohit's restlessness to meet his uncle Govind Rao regarding the arrangements to be made for the reception of Ashwin Panje and his affair

with Isabel, he agrees to their request to have discussion about his marriage. Gopal's melodramatic appeal to Rohit reveals the desperate attempts of a parent to finalize the daughter's marriage. Rohit's consent to have discussion with Sirur couple when he is in love with Isabel shows his double standards. The following dialogue reveals it:

> Vidula: But it gives you a sense of power, doesn't it? To have a girl waiting for you- her parents kneeling before you- begging and pleading. …It really must make you feel grand.
>
> Rohit (Angrily): I didn't ask them to come. I didn't want the scene.
>
> (Father comes around and sits on a chair)
>
> Vidula: Nonsense. Then why didn't you tell them you'r going around with Isabel? You could have told them you two were as good as engaged.
>
> Rohit: Aw, come on. Why should I tell them about my personal life?
>
> Vidula: Because if you had brought in Isabel, that scene would have ended right here. Not just today. A long time ago. I don't think you wanted it to. You were enjoying the grandstand (*WA*, 42)

In the fourth scene Hema's attitude towards Vivan is changed. Vivan's words of infatuation have their effect on Hema. Now that Hema has got Vidula's certificate in which she has noticed some mistakes. In the place of her father's name, her Uncle Ramadas Nadakarni's name was found. Their discussion is suggestive of a possible relationship between Ramadas and Vidula's mother. The words of Hema and her mother reinforce the meaning -'Hema: She was very good' and 'Mother: If left things as they are.' (*WA*, 51) As Radhabai was planning for the dishes to be served at the dinner which they have arranged for their uncle Govind Rao, the quarrel begins between the mother and Radhabai. Radhabai, according to the others is qurelling with others because she has become psychic since she saw the serial in the T.V. She is reminded of the tragic incident that happened before. Radhabai's daughter Yamuna, because of the poverty at home, had

to go to Bangalore to work for a rich Trader. Radhabai also went to Bangalore after the death of her husband and joined some house as a cook. There she got a chance to meet her daughter. They used to meet very often. But after a couple of years the Trader passed away leaving Yamuna alone. She became mad and was roaming about. Once, when Radhabai was working on the terrace, she heard her daughter calling her for help. But by the time she came down her daughter disappeared. This tragedy of her daughter came to her mind when she saw the serial about a mother and her daughter. As the scene ends Vidula expects some relief and asks others to join her singing and dancing. All participate in singing and dancing.

The second part of the play comprising of five scenes takes the readers three years forward and again backward and to the present. The fifth scene takes place in the Software Production House at Bangalore in which Rohit is working. This is in fact the continuation of the first scene. After his training in Germany, Rohit has returned to India and is working under Prathibha, an Orisa lady. Presently they are working on two episodes – the second is based on the life of Radhabai while the first is based on Vidula. Rohit is much detached from the family connections and is planning to make serials on people who are closely related to him. Karnad, in the 2007 edition published by Manohara Grantha Mala, has dropped the details of the episode on Vidula. The same has elaborate details in the previous edition. In the English edition the details figure in the first scene itself. As suggested in the third scene Rohit is married to Tapasya and finished his training in Germany sponsored by his in laws. Presently, Rohit is alone in Bangalore as his wife has gone to her parents' house for delivery. In the absence of his wife he wishes to develop friendship with Isabel who is working in the same office. But Prathibha's intervention prevents him from it. The double standards of Rohit, perhaps represents 21st century life that has no values. The sixth scene is set in an Internet Café. Vidula, as revealed in the second scene spends much time in the Internet Café. In this

scene she is chatting with a virtual boy. Vidula doesn't have any inhibition to use language that connotes sex. The following dialogue of Vidula reveals the identity of Radhabai's daughter Yamuna, besides her character.

> Vidula: I have been sold off.
>
> Voice: You have been what, baby?
>
> Vidula: Sold off. I told you I am a kept woman kept by a trader. I am his concubine. Maintained by a man much older than me.
>
> Voice: Yes, you said something like that. I thought you were fibbing.
>
> …
>
> Vidula: He is dying. He has had a heart attck. Last night. He is in the ICU. Could be dead by tomorrow. His family is bound to throw me out. So I had to find a new master. A younger man. He lives in the US. He has paid a good price to my family. (*WA*, 64)

As the chatting continues, two people enter and try to prevent her from chatting. They are the guardians of the ancient religion. One of them identifies Vidula. She threatens that she would call police if they continue to disturb her. She also says her uncle Ramadas Nadkarni is the police commissioner. Unable to bear the humiliation they leave the Café.

The seventh scene reveals the anxiety of Vidula's parents regarding Ashwin Panje's visit and meeting with Vidula. Ramdas's clean hands in spending money for Hema's wedding and the job offer to Rohit from Bangalore are also revealed here.

The eighth scene is significant from the point of view of Vidula's marriage. She is meeting her would be husband to decide her marriage in a restaurant. Ashwin speaks throughout the scene. Vidula is silent and her presence is insignificant suggesting the male domination. He asks her to be his life partner and assist him to solve his spiritual crisis. He says that he is very rich and the American economy is in the hands of Asians.

Although he has enjoyed all the luxury of life, he has realized that the life in America is absurd and meaningless. But as he believed only the Indian culture can save the world, he wants an Indian to be his wife in his mission to save this world. As he speaks to her of his expectations of the role of his future wife, he is searching contact numbers in the mobile. Vidula doesn't respond but in the ninth scene it becomes clear that she agreed to all conditions and gave her consent for the marriage and they are married.

The last scene takes place in Vidula's house. She is getting ready to leave for America. Rohit and Hema advise Vidula about her future. The dialogue suggests that they are not sure that Vidula's marriage will last long.

Hema: … Don't say such dreadful things (pause) it's about Ashwin. How is everything between you and him?

Vidula: Well, you know how it is. Eight days in a hotel. Was it intimacy? Getting to know to each other? ... I don't know

Rohit: You said he barely spoke to you.

Vidula: There was nothing to discuss. Can't blame him. He said we'll get to know each other once I come over there. Fair enough.

Hema: Now that you are going there, we are sure everything will be alright. We are absolutely certain. But if things don't quite work out …if you find you cannot live with him…

Vidula: Why shouldn't be able to live with him?

…

Rohit: What she is trying to tell you is if at any moment you wish to divorce Ashwin and come back, don't hesitate to do so.

…

Rohit: We live in a modern world. A divorce is okay. It's no shame.

Vidula (Calmly): I will never divorce Ashwin. (*WA*, 85, 86)

As shown earlier she does live with Ashwin. The play gives details of just three years of Vidul's married life. The question is whether she lived happily or her life is like her sister's is left open for the readers to think. Now she bids goodbye to everybody and leaves for Bangalore where Doctor Gopal has arranged a guest house for them to stay till Vidula leaves for America by a flight. Before she leaves, her mother's advice to her reveals not only her wish but also about what sort of life she and her elder daughter are living. Vidula's mother had met her future husband just twice while her grandmother had met her would be husband on the day of her marriage. Their life is almost over. Mother says she couldn't even complete her B.A. degree. Hema's case was not different from her. She was intelligent and beautiful and is satisfied with her life as a wife. Therefore she wants at least Vidula to do something worth while. Vidula's father also speaks, and repeats that 'marriage is a gamble.' At this moment Hema receives a call from Isabel regarding the accommodation at Bangalore. Vivan's appearance here, after all leave and his message to Hema, though unimportant, clarifies that Hema-Vivan relation doesn't grow. After every one leaves Radhabai switches on TV and starts talking to her self while watching it. The memory of her daughter's tragic life haunts her. The play ends with the aside of Radhabai.

The play according to C.N. Ramachandran represents the French proverb *plus ca change c'est la meme chose* (literally means the more the change the more the same). Marriage is the oldest social institution of the Indian society. Karnad through his critical analysis of the institution of marriage reveals that although the society is changed by the introduction of information communication technology, Internet, mobile, the society of male domination hasn't changed. The life of the representatives of three generations in the play such as Vidula and Hema, their mother and their grand mother is same in spite of all the changes that took place in their society. The words of Vidula's mother at the end of the play show very clearly the life of women. The life of women is governed by men.

There are opportunities, the women are capable, yet they are restricted to home and family. Karnad employs 'satiric' mode to reveal about the Indian society, especially about the system of marriage.

Anju Mallige, Broken Images, and ***Wedding Album*** register a deviation in Karnad's approach to drama writing. Although Karnad was a bit hesitant to write contemporary social dramas initially, with his recently written ***Wedding Album***, he proved that he is equally discerning in articulating his experience and observations in the realistic mode. ***Anju Mallige*** is a complex play that explores the man-woman relationship for the modern audience. At one level the play reveals how possessiveness, envy, conflicts and tensions in the man-woman relationships restrict and direct their lives and at another level, it explains the problems of expatriates in the foriegn land. *Broken Images* is a monologue in which Manjula the central character makes a revelation of her life of deceit and falsehood through the introspection. The ***Wedding Album*** discusses the institution of marriage in the contemporary society. Karnad employs technology in these two plays to explore the subjects he is dealing with. Thus, Karnad is a successful dramatist who experiments with any mode, and however challenging it is, as it is his firm commitment to drama and theatre.

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Notes

[1] Dharwadkar, 'Introduction' ***Collected Plays Vol. Two*** xxvii.

[2] G.S.Amura, ***Girish Karnad Hagu Bharathiya Rangabhoomi*** (Dharwad: Manohara Grantha Mala, 2008) 65. (My translation).

[3] G.S. Amura, ***Girish Karnad*** 65. (My translation).

[4] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…'50.

[5] Maya Pandit, 'The Flickering play of desire and memory: Exploring Driven show' ***Girish Karnad's plays*** Ed. Tutun Mukharjee, 319.

[6] Maya Pandit, 'The Flickering play of desire …' 318

[7] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 51, 52.

[8] Maya Pandit, 'The Flickering …' 320.

[9] Girish Karnad, ***Anju Mallige- Samagra Nataka,*** Girish Karnad (Dharwad: Manohar Grantha Mala: 2007) 274. (My translation). (Subsequent references to this play are shown in the text itself)

[10] Maya Pandit, 'The Flickering play of desire …' 328.

[11] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…54.

[12] Edward Leeson, Ed. ***The New Golden Treasury of English Verse*** (Great Britain: Pan Books in association with Macmillan London Ltd, 1980) 430.

[13] Mukharjee, 'The splintered self: A Heap of Broken Images at Rangashankara' 333.

[14] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…'53.

[15]Girish Karnad, ***Broken Images Collected Plays Vol Two***, 261. (Subsequent references to this play are shown in the text itself).

[16] Sudhir K Arora, 'spiritualizing the Aesthetics (of ***Flowers***) Versus Breaking the Ethics (of *Image*) A critical study of Karnad's Two Monologues: ***Flowers*** and ***Broken***

Images'*, *Thunder on stage: A Study of Girish Karnad's plays. Eds. C.L. Khatri, Sudhir K. Arora (Jaipur: Book Enclave, 2008) 227, 228.

[17] Dharwadkar, Introduction ***Collected Plays Vol Two*** Xxix.

[18] Mukharjee, 'In His Own Voice…' 52, 53.

[19] Karnad, Appendix – 1' ***Collected Plays Vol One*** 303.

[20] Girish Karnad (Interview) ***Girish Karnad Natakagalu: Vimarshe*** Ed. Krishna Moorthy Chandar (Bangalore: Sapna Book House, 2000). 215 (My translation).

[21]Girish Karnad, ***Wedding Album*** (New Delhi: OUP, 2009)51(Subsequent references to this play are shown in the text itself).

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Chapter-Six

Conclusion

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As myths, history and oral traditions have been a part of human experience, the writers depend largely on them in their interpretations of life. But the dependence on them varies from time to time owing to the role of literature the particular age demands for. The presence of the ancient narratives in literature is significant in colonial as well as post-colonial periods, yet, the function these narratives play isn't the same. One notes that the cultural presence of the Indian epics ***Mahabharata*** and ***Ramayana*** and other legendary, historical or folk narratives in every mode of transmission in India during the colonial period was a strategic attempt to neutralize the indignities of the colonial subjugation. During this period, the cultural nationalists used the ancient narratives in a 'heroic' mode to defend the identity and cultural superiority, while the colonizers and Indian reformists used them ironically to criticize the natives highlighting the defects of the society. In the post-colonial period, especially with Karnad, the recourse to cultural legacy has been more intense as the political freedom gave greater opportunity to regain the past. But among the nationalists there is an inner division in their use of the past narratives. For some past narratives are the ideals to re-root into the cultural legacy for the cultural positioning while others use them to revise and develop a critical appreciation of the past for a better cultural understanding. Therefore the approach to the past narratives in the post-colonial period is some times thought to be similar to the earlier cultural nationalists and Indian reformists. The parallel use of both 'heroic' and 'satiric' modes in the writings during the post-independence period continues to be the major concerns of the writers. The idea that the Indian drama offers resistance to colonization or the experience of domination is too simplistic because the post-colonial drama engages not only with the past but also with the complexity of the encounter between India and the

West and its results. The resistance to imperialism is only one dimension of the post-colonial drama. The dramatists and other theatre artists have adopted and rejected the colonial inheritance in terms of structure, language, ideology and conventions of representations. In other words, the plays besides being anti-colonial critiques are connected to modern and post-modern western practices. The dramatists through their translations, adaptations, inter-cultural appropriations maintain inter-textuality with the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial dramas. Therefore there is the co-existence of classical, post-classical and colonial Indian past in the plays of post-colonial plays. This 'multi cultural' legacy in the post-colonial drama problematizes the study of post-colonial drama. However, the dramas that use ancient narratives deal with the problems of life - the oppressive structures of society, patriarchy, caste, class and rigid traditional practices.

The study of Karnad's use of ancient narratives, especially, Indian myths, history, and oral traditions explores the fact that the narratives in the plays are in the modified forms. In the literary field there is an increasing dependence on the repertoire of myths, legends and folklore and the rich historical narratives. These ancient narratives are rooted firmly in ancient societies and passed on to the successive generations as interpretations to the rituals and practices observed in the society. The ancient narratives have been continuously used in oral and literary traditions in India. The genre of drama, from the ancient times relied very much on such narratives. The plays of Bhasa and Kalidasa are based on *Mahabharata*. The playwrights such as Tagore, Dharmavir Bharati, Ratan Tiyan, Mohan Rakesh, Adya Rangacharya, Vijaya Tendulkar, G P Deshpande and others use ancient narratives in their plays. Though Karnad also uses the narratives narratives in his plays, he uses them to reflect the modern human society. No mythical or folk or historical character is used in Karnad's plays as it is originally sketched. Similarly no story is employed in its original form. The ancient archetypal characters or plot get demystified and modernized in Karnad's plays because the playwright's interest is

focused on the hard realities of contemporary India than to the past. Karnad is obviously distressed to see the social, cultural, political and religious deterioration of the Indian society during the second half of the twentieth century. As a writer, Karnad responds to the nation's state of disillusionment by way of articulating his painful observations in the form of plays. The human existential problems such as anguish, restlessness and absurdity of life, the innate contradictions in man himself, the conflicts between the ideals and the realities, the difference between fiction and reality, man's identity crisis and desire to evolve into a complete being, the man- woman relationship before and after the marriage, the status of women, the struggles and aspirations of women, man's jealousy and treachery, caste and class differences, the problems of the rigid traditional society, the conflicts between the spiritual and the temporal worlds, the status of social institutions such as marriage in the Indian society are some of the issues find prominence in Karnad's plays. These themes in the plays are reinforced through the mythical, historical and folk narratives in their refined forms. Therefore, in all his plays Karnad's concern is to discuss the present life and its problems. Besids his modern approach, Karnad handles the subjects with his humanistic concerns. In order to discuss a society of uncertainties tangled relationships, disillusionments, denouements, anxieties, and every sort of upheavals, Karnad employs the past narratives as tools. The past narratives in the plays reflect the present reality more accurately as they have been revised and changed as proper 'objective co-relatives' or metaphors. In plays that have no references to past or past narrative structures, Karnad quite accueately and clearly shows the problems of contemporary society that is governed by the conspicuous myths of today such as post-colonial struggles, globalization and the information communication technology. It is interesting to note that Karnad doesn't employ the narratives the moment he comes across them. Instead, he allows the narratives to undergo revision in his mind for a long time. For example the myth of Yavakri finds prolonged transmutation process in his mind.

(Karnad writes about it-'I knew it [the Yavakri myth] had to be turned into a play. For next thirty seven years, I struggled with it to fit all the ramifications of the myth within some sort of a manageable shape'-Preface) In this process of modification Karnad revises, reshapes, reorients and when it is suitable to the play he uses it in the play. Karnad wrote ***Naga-Mandala*** several years after he had heard the two folk stories from A.K.Ramanujan. In the case of ***Tuglaq*** Karnad read history, did research on the topic and when it grew as a proper subject, he wrote the play. Karnad doesn't , so to say 'retell' the old myths, legends, folk stories or history. He is not interested in retelling of the ancient narratives but in're-visioning' them to suit his artistic purpose. In one sense he is not entirely 'loyal' to the original sources. They are used as refined tools in the plays to 'dramatize a particular story effectively' and interpret the contemporary realities.

In ***Yayati***, Karnad takes a lot of liberty with the original myth and reshapes with deletions and additions to make it acceptable to modern times for the connotative richness and the contemporary appeal. Yayati is already married to Devayani and in the course of action of the play marries Sharmistha. Pooru, in the play is not Sharmistha's son whereas in the myth he is her third son. Chitralekha and Swarnalata are Karnad's inventions. The entire action is compressed and takes place in a day's time. Pooru's acceptance of the old age is not out of filial devotion as in the myth. He accepts it because his wish is to fulfill his responsibility as a King and realize the visions of his ancestors. Yayati in the myth enjoys the sensual pleasures for thousand years and returns promptly the youth to his son while in the play he is forced to return it immediately. His inability to face the consequences of the exchange, especially Chitralekha's logic leads him to give it back soon to his son. Swarnalata's story is Karnad's invention and this reinforces the voice against the values perpetuated in the myth concerning role of man and woman in the society. The gender and class differences evident in the Indian society are questioned in the play. The play shows how male superiority, the upper caste domination lead to

misery, rivalry, repentance and meaninglessness. So the mythical plot becomes complex and modern as Karnad has invested it with contemporary meaning. Thus mythical story in the play is revised and given a wider dimension to reflect the problems and difficulties that the contemporary Indian society confronts. It is in this sense that myth is a refined tool for Karnad to handle the contemporary life.

In ***MaNishada*** the Washer-man struggles to live on account of his loose remarks about Rama. Rama's crucial decision to banish Seetha for life is based on the remarks of the Washer-man. Like Yayati's problems due to his strong desire to live young, the Washer-man's troubles are due to his remarks. In the myth the Washer-man is an insignificant character and a reason in name for Rama to send Seetha away. But Karnad has made him a tragic hero in the play. The Valmiki–Washer-man meeting is Karnad's invention. The efforts of both Valmiki and the Washer -man to unite Rama and Seetha go in vain. Valmiki wanted to unite Rama and Seetha, yet the union was not achieved because the separation was inevitable. The agony of the death of the 'crouncha' bird was so deep in Valmiki that he could not come out of it. In the Washer- man's case, it was his dislike for Rama that made him pass remarks and that caused all the troubles. Karnad focuses on individual actions to expose the absurdity of life with all its passions, conflicts and struggles. So Karnad shows that the ancient Indian myths can be used in the modified forms to explore the theme of loss of individual identity. The myths in the plays are demystified, revised, re-interpreted and reoriented. Karnad's new perspective of looking at the myth is clearly seen in ***Ma-Nishada*** also.

Karnad in ***Tughlaq*** also doesn't restrict himself to reflect only the historical fact. The imaginative re-enactment of the 14th century history makes the historical play a political allegory. Tughlaq and his step - mother episode is Karnad's contribution. The rule of Tughlaq besides being contemporary in its appeal refreshes the memory of the audience about the past. The period of Islamic imperialism in the history of India had

been marginalized by the later periods of Mughal and British imperialism and therefore forgotten. The play re-inscribes the narrative of Tughlaq's reign in the audience's memory and revises the perceptions to understand the contemporary political, social, religious and economic crisis in the Indian society. The revision of Tughlaq's history functions on both 'heroic' and 'satiric' modes to explore the contradictions in the character of Tughlaq. In spite of Tughlaq's secular out look, generosity, farsightedness, extraordinary intelligence and ability, he becomes totally unpopular and helpless due to his failure in all his welfare measures. The tragic flaw in him is the lack of credibility, authenticity, and legitimacy. Another big hurdle is that he is functioning in a situation where there exists the rivalry between Hindus and Muslims. The gradual alienation of Tughlaq from the people in the course of his rule is because he has failed to win the confidence of the people. He has deviated himself from the religious beliefs to become a despotic ruler. People condemn and rebel against Tughlaq because of his tyrannical rule. The play is relevant to contemporary India as the country has been passing through a curious stage. The political leaders are trying to bring about an impossible Hindu – Muslim harmony and end up with severe tragic repercussions. In this context Karnad by visiting history tries to reflect the present administration and find answers to the problems. Karnad believes that it is necessary 'turning to tradition and history now and seeking an answer there'. The idealist and tyrant in Tughlaq's character represent many a political leaders of today, although the play was viewed as suggestive of the Nehru rule in India when it was written during 1960's. So it becomes evident that the 'heroic' and 'satiric' modes in the play revise the audiences' perception of the past through its contemporary relevance.

In ***Hayavadana,*** Karnad employs two folk stories to discuss the problem of human identity in a world of confused relationships. The story of the Transposed Heads is originally found in Sanskrit story collection ***Kathasarithasagara*** and later in Thomas

Mann's novella *The Transposed Heads*. Karnad uses this story in the play to deal with the problems of modern man such as identity crisis, metaphysical anguish, man's quest for perfection. Karnad's characters in the play do not have the same folk names or names used by Mann. The places are also different. The story of the 'Transposed Heads' is juxtaposed with the story of Hayavadana. The tragic story of Hayavadana is Karnad's invention and this serves as an outer frame to the tale of 'Transposed Heads'. Hayavadana's efforts to get rid of the horse's head and change into a complete human being go in vain. Instead, quite comically, with the goddess 'Kali's' blessings, he becomes a complete horse and the human voice he still possessed also changes into a horse's neigh when he laughs for Padmini's son. The logic that 'head is supreme over the body' is proved in the case of Hayavadana like in Devadatta and Kapila. But the two plots - the main plot and the sub plot are linked through Padmini's child. The child becomes normal when he starts laughing and clapping his hands in response to Hayavadana's laughter. The problem of Devadatta and Kapila is also solved by a saint's verdict that 'the head is supreme'. Devadatta and Kapila come back to life and when their heads are exchanged they find a solution. However, the solution they have got is a temporary one. They gradually metamorphose into original forms and their problems remain unsolved. Similarly in the case of Padmini and Hayavadana the problems are left unsolved. In spite of the blessings of the goddess 'Kali' and the traditional morality, there are no simple solutions to human problems. Karnad through 'Bhagavat', dolls, chorus and masks reveal to the readers the thoughts and inner psyche of the characters, especially of Padmini. Padmini's wish to meet Kapila when her husband turned into his original self, the duel between Devadatta and Kapila and at last 'Sati' performed by Padmini reveal the fact that there is no solution to human problems except death. Karnad with the folk theatre techniques projects successfully the existential problems of human beings. Thus Karnad

through the modified folk stories and theatre techniques explores the maladies modern life.

In ***Bali: The Sacrifice,*** Karnad discuses the conflict between Jain and Hindu religions to delve deep into the controversy over violence in intention and actual violence. The Queen commits adultery even before she meets the 'mahout'. Yet, her actual adultery, though unacceptable to both her husband and her mother- in-law is being pardoned and compromised for the sacrifice of a cock of dough. The Queen on the one hand, in spite of her opposition to the sacrifice of any sort, agrees to the sacrifice of cock of dough and the King and the Queen-Mother though insist upon offering live sheeps agree to offer a cock of dough to atone for the Queen's sin. The confrontation and defence of the characters end up in a fair compromise. However, the figurine of the dough comes to life and crows when the King and the Queen are about to sacrifice it. Karnad uses this bit of fiction to justify that intended violence is actual violence. The meaning is further reinforced by the death of Queen. The Queen stabs herself in a spirit of self-sacrifice. The play dramatizes the denouement of the Queen from her high position to adultery and death. The death of the Queen is Karnad's invention. The murder of the King and the Queen- Mother of the mythical story is replaced by the self- sacrifice of the Queen in the play. This deviation intensifies the dramatic conflict between the intended violence and actual violence. The core events of the mythical narrative such as the Queen's adultery and the violent death are retained. The Queen crosses matrimonial bond and unites with the 'mahout' owing to the pressures of her childless marriage. The Queen as a Jain is against violence of any sort. But the act of impaling herself by the sword proves the fact that she acted contrary to what she believed in life. Thus the inter-generic narrative of ***Yashodhara Charite*** in its revised form in the play explores meaning relevant for the present day. Karnad subjects the Queen's act of adultery and the King's sacrifice of cock of dough for a close scrutiny in the play.

Karnad's ***The Fire and the Rain*** employs the revised mythical stories of Yavakri and Vritra-Indra. The mythical narratives had been in Karnad's mind for about thirty seven years and during this period he thoroughly revised and articulated them into a rich play of three acts. In the process of revision, Karnad has humanized the myth. The seven - year long fire sacrifice under the guidance of Paravasu reaches its end. But as it is nearing its end a few incidents occur in and around the sacrificial site disrupting the sacrifice revealing both the positive and negative human feelings like jealousy, betrayal, treachery, deceit, compassion, and selfless love. The 'fire' is the fire of revenge, lust, anger, jealousy, treachery, violence and death and the 'rain' is the self –sacrifice, compassion, divine grace, forgiveness, revival and regeneration. Karnad through the mythical as well as humanized characters reveal these human emotions. Yavakri, Paravasu, Raibhya and Bharadwaja represent the destructive emotions whereas Arvasu, Nittilai, hunters and actors represent the positive emotions. Karnad's re-working of the myth in the play for a humanistic appeal offers an aesthetic experience of salvation. The selfless love of Nittilai and the sacrifice of Arvasu at the end of the play please Indra. Karnad by demystifying the characters reveals his humanistic concern. Karnad, in none of the plays, has used myths in entirety. He is more interested in only characters, episodes of the myths that are useful in dramatizing the contemporary themes. If some characters or episodes are interesting, he modifies them according to the need in his plays. This is Karnad's approach to Myths.

Two folk stories of Kannada are used in ***Naga-Mandala*** to articulate feminist concern in a society which expects chastity of women. The folk theatre, according to Karnad has energy to uphold the traditional values and also question these values. The *A Story and a Song* and *The Serpent Lover* serve as metaphors in the play. The women used to narrate these stories to their children and thus they reveal how women view life. Karnad, in the play, is supporting the women's view of life through these stories which

offer him the possibilities to question the traditional values. Karnad has retained the structure of these stories while using them in the play. But for the dramatic effect, the stories have been altered here and there. For example in the original story the 'story' and the 'song' take the shape of man's shoe and coat to arouse suspicion in the husband. It is, in fact, to avenge the lady for restricting their life. But Karnad makes the 'story' a young lady the 'song' a sari to make the wife suspect her husband. However in the main plot of the play it is the husband who accuses his wife of her adultery, although she is innocent and honest. In *The Serpent Lover* in spite of Kamakshi's illicit relation with the serpent lover she is able to live happily with her husband. After the death of her lover she gets everything she wished for. But in Karnad's version the snake doesn't die. It is protected in her tresses. She is able to live with both her husband and the snake lover happily. Karnad rescues the snake as if to support the wish of a woman to live with a person who is compassionate and loving. In the original story it is at the cost of her lover, her husband is changed into a faithful life partner. The triangular love, an often recurring motif in Karnad appears in this play also. But it is interpreted from the feminist point of view. Thus Karnad's treatment of the subject by using folk narratives exemplifies his humanistic interest in the socio- cultural reform of the society.

Karnad re-inscribes the historical narrative in the audience's memory through his ***Tale-Danda*** when the national life was affected by the 'Mandir' and 'Mandal' movements. The play dramatizes the story of an egalitarian movement called 'Sharana' Movement in the Kingdom of Kalyan during 12th century. The movement ended in horror and bloodshed due the violent opposition of the orthodox upper caste people. The irony is that the reformation intended by Basavanna and his followers through a casteless society fails for the lack of support from all sections of society including the orthodox people. For Karnad this 12th century history is an appropriate metaphor to the present day communal and caste crisis. Therefore Karnad uses this narrative in *Tale-Danda* to review the past for

its contemporary relevance. In the play Karnad explores the causes behind the failure of the 'Sharana' movement. In spite of the support of King Bijjala, the movement meets its tragic end because the orthodox people found it a threat to their life and the followers of the movement were in a hurry to change the society without realizing the principle of the movement and the hard reality around them. The inter-caste marriage that they held, in fact, enraged the orthodox people and this resulted in the sheer violent opposition of the orthodox upper caste people to the 'Sharana' Movement. Thus the 12th century history in the play makes an ironical comment on the miserable and disillusioned state of modern India. In other words the play with its historical narrative engages in the intellectual debate on the present day communal and caste crisis. The interesting and the striking quality of the play is that the playwright's articulation is simple and straight forward in relating the scenario of an ancient Indian Kingdom to the modern day India although they are separated by many centuries. Therefore Karnad's *Tale-Danda* is pointer to the static and stagnant state of the nation. Today fanatics and the so called secularists are the real threats and cause deterioration of the nation.

In ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan***, Karnad reconstructs the life of a warrior King who spent most of his life on horseback as a man of dreams, as a man of religious tolerance, as a great patriot, and as a man with keen, inquisitive mind and desire to learn and move ahead by juxtaposing the dream and reality. The playwright through the juxtaposition of Tipu's dreams and real incidents explores the different dimensions of the character beyond the facts and dates. In ***Tughlaq*** and ***Tale-Danda***, Karnad is re-inscribing the audience's memory of the past history. But in ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan***, because Tipu's history is fresh in the audience's memory, Karnad tries to review the narrative from another perspective for revising the readers' perceptions of the past. For Karnad Tipu appears 'quite humane' compared to the British and Marathas. Tipu, in spite of his love for religion, he was a great warrior ruler, a trader and more than that a great

patriot. It is the dreams that were recorded by Tipu during his forty years of life that interested Karnad. And based on the dreams Karnad tries to explore whether Tipu's actions are dictated by his dreams. For Karnad the history written by the British hasn't treated Tipu fairly and therefore he tries to reinvent the other dimensions of the character of Tipu. Karnad's sympathetic attitude towards the tragic life of Tipu makes him to employ the 'heroic' mode of expression in this play unlike the first two historical plays in which he has employed both 'heroic' and 'ironic' modes to revise the perceptions of the past. The play disproves the colonizer's thought that the Indians are barbarians and they require British rulers to civilize them. Tipu unlike majority of the Kings in India never compromised with the British. His resistance throughout his reign, though ends in death proves that the British were wrong in their perception about India. Thus, Karnad offers a different interpretation of history highlighting two conspicuous aspects of Tipu's character – the 'extraordinary high sense of accountability' and 'honesty to his duty' as a King and 'the absolute fearlessness he displayed throughout his life.'

Karnad's ***Flowers***, one of the two monologues, employs a folk narrative. As it is suggested in the word 'monologue', it is a short eighteen page prose narratives and a full text with the elements of a drama in the compressed form, although the question about to which genre it belongs is very much challenging. All of Karnad's plays are full length plays with the exception of ***Ma-Nishada*** and ***Flowers***. Except ***Flowers*** all his plays have found stage productions at regional, national and inter-national levels in different languages. Although the ***Flowers*** has not been staged, because of its folk material the researcher has included in the study to explore its source and the thematic concern of this piece of writing. Karnad employs the folk narrative about a priest who belongs to the district of Chitradurga. This folk have been popularized by T.R. Subba Rao through his historical novel ***Hamsageetha.*** Although Karnad employs this folk narrative, he modifies the characters and plot to reflect confrontation between religious devotion and erotic love.

The main event 'Shivelinga sprouting hair' is retained in the play. Here in the play, the priest himself narrates the story. The triangular relationship (Karnad's recurring theme) in the reversed form is seen in the priest's narrative. The priest's relation with his wife and the Courtesan forms the triangular love. It is in fact a departure from the focus of folk story where the triangle includes the priest (Veeranna), the Chieftain (Palegar) and the singer (Venkatasubbayya). The priest in the folk, at last is rescued by God. But, in spite of God's blessings, he cuts his head and offers it to God. The tragic end of the priest is on account of devotion to God and love to his mistress. In ***Flowers*** the ending gets more philosophical justification with the narrator's realization that God has condescended on him through his blessings. In fact, the priest prayed for the strength to live in disgrace because he has tainted himself by his relationship with the Courtesan and deceived both his wife and the Courtesan. He is not happy because he is not justified for the God's grace on him. He feels humiliated and unworthy of the honour bestowed on him by God. He doesn't feel honoured with 'state saint' recognition. That's why he wishes to end his life. Karnad has spelt very clearly the priest's confession of his sin and wish to end his life. The play offers an interpretation of the nature of man's piety in god and its effect on him.

Karnad's plays which have non-mythical, non-historical and non-folk narratives focus on social issues. Karnad, in spite of his disinterest in writing realistic plays, wrote three contemporary social dramas to deal with social issues. ***Anju Mallige*** is a post-colonial play because it deals with a situation that is essentially post colonial. The problems of expatriates in England are discussed in the play. But the play's main focus is on the issue of incest. Satish and Yamini are brother and sister and both of them go to England owing to their incestuous childhood, although there they are involved in studies. Satish wants to keep himself away from Yamini while Yamini's wish is to be with him. The relationship doesn't improve, instead leads to the tragic end of Yamini. The psychologically disturbed Yamini, in spite of her new relations is not able to live. Satish

and his new friend Julia with their new awakening plan to start their married life. Thus Karnad explores on the one hand the problems of adjustments of the expatriates and on the other the incestuous relation and its consequences. The 'non- Indian location' ensures greater freedom for the playwright to deal a topic that is socially concealed and confined to individuals. Karnad shows great courage to discuss the rigid social taboos of the Indian society.

Broken Images is Karnad's next contemporary social play. The one act, one character, and one hour long play deals with the subject of the socio- psychological breakdown in the human communication and relationships. Karnad uses technology in the place of ancient narratives to explore the psyche of the central character of the play. Manjula Nayak betrays Kannada language and her own sister for money, name and fame. She publishes her sister's novel in her name and gets huge royalty. The secret life of Manjula is exposed to the world through a humanized TV image. Karnad has humanized the technology in this play like the humanized mythical, historical and folk characters in his other plays.

Karnad's latest play ***Wedding Album*** dramatizes the institution of marriage in the Indian society. The effect of modern technology is seen in every sphere of life including the marriage system. The internet and mobiles have revolutionized the system of communications. The old elaborate rituals before and after the marriages have been simplified due to the technologies. Karnad, writing in this context, tries to explore whether there is real improvement of life today. The marriage of Vidula and Ashwin Panje is the central plot of the play. Karnad in the play reveals that, in fact, although lot of changes took place in the society, the position of women has not improved. Vidula's life is not much different from her mother or grandmother though she has greater opportunities in life. Ashwin Panje who is settled in America marries Vidula on the condition that she will remain Indian to save him in his spiritual crisis. He wants Vidula

to be his wife in his mission to save the world. Vidula silently agrees to all conditions and marries him. Her marriage is like her mother's who has sacrificed all her individuality for her husband and family. Karnad employs 'satiric' mode while sketching the characters in the play.

The traditional sources serve as structural outlines in Karnad's plays. The historical, mythical and folk narratives provide appropriate structures and based on them Karnad constructs plots to his plays. Karnad's ***Yayati*** owes to the epic ***Mahabharata.*** In the first scene itself it becomes clear that Yayati wishes to have Sharmistha as his wife along with his Queen Devayani. His decision to marry Sharmistha infuriates his wife and that results in Shukracharya's curse on him. But he exchanges his old age with his son's youth. Afterwards he returns the youth to his son and takes back the old age. This structure of the myth is retained in the play. Based on this mythical structure Karnad has developed a modern complex plot to discuss the existential struggles of man. ***MaNishada*** is based on a mythical episode in ***Ramayana.*** Structurally it is about the Washer-man who had caused Seetha's exile for life. The Washer-man is the central character of the play. Karnad has re-interpreted this character to represent the absurdity of modern life. Karnad's *Tughlaq* owes to the history of the medieval age; structurally the play demonstrates the rise and fall of Tughlaq, a Muslim emperor who was one of the fascinating Kings to occupy the throne in Delhi. The historical narrative in the play provides a structure to project the contemporary political situation in India. The contradictions in Tughlaq represent leaders who are caught in between contradictions. ***Hayavadana*** is based on Vetala Story via Thomas Mann's novella ***The Transposed Heads.*** Padmini transposes the heads of Devadatta and Kapila and as per solution offered by King Vikrama (head is superior to the human body) gets her husband's head and Kapila's body. Based on this frame work Karnad has developed the plot of *Hayavadana*. The desire for perfection is not fulfilled and Padmini's problem is not solved

permanently. Karnad used the story to reflect on the problem of human identity. The play ***Naga Mandala*** is based on the two folk stories. These folk stories are originally narrated by women to the children and other women. The stories represent how women view their life. The desires, suppressed emotions of women and their wisdom find expression in this play. Karnad retains the structural outlines of both the stories in the play. In the first story the woman who knew the story and the song is punished for keeping them in herself. In the second story the woman is able to get everything she desired, in spite of her sufferings in the hands of her wicked husband. Karnad modifies the story to reinforce the women's issues. The structural outlines allow Karnad to delve deep into the issue and offer solution. ***Bali: The Sacrifice*** is owed to the thirteenth century Kannada epic *Yashodara Charithe* by Janna. The King and Queen-Mother are very much disturbed by the Queen's adultery. They offer a cock of dough as a sacrifice to atone for the sin of the Queen. The cock of dough crows when it was about to be sacrificed. The adultery of the Queen and the crowing of the cock of dough provided Karnad the structure to articulate his arguments with regard to the controversy between violence in intention and actual violence. Karnad builds his debate on the contraversy based on this mythical structure. In ***The Fire and The Rain*** Karnad uses Yavakri myth and the story of Indra-Vritra from ***Mahabharata.*** The treachery of the mythical characters provides a base for the tragic plot of the play. All the characters, major events, the ritual of fire sacrfice are retained in the play. But in the construction of the plot myths are taken as broad structural outlines.Yavakri's jealousy and vengeance against the family of Raibhya and his tragic end, Raibhya's fury against Yavakri and his tragic death in the hands of his own son, Paravasu's treachery against his brother and his immolation at last, Indra's treachery against his brother Vishwarupa have been retained in the play. Karnad has developed these myths into a complex plot by some additions and deletions to humanize the myth and reflect on the positive human values such as innocence, selfless love, compassion,

sacrifice, and honesty. In ***Tale-Danda***, Karnad uses the 12th century historical narratives to discuss the communal and caste rifts in the Indian society. Karnad doesn't modify the narrative for the play, instead, he uses it as a metaphor to the present day crisis. Basavanna's egalitarian movement collapses because of the lack of support from all sections of society. In ***Tughlaq***, Tughlaq failed to get support to all his welfare measures. ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*** is owed to the recent historical narrative about Tipu Sultan. The dreams recorded by Tipu provide the broad structure to the play to reflect on the life of Tipu Sultan.

Karnad creates mythical structures in his contemporary social plays. In ***Anju Mallige*** Karnad discusses the problems of the expatriates in England during 1960's. The post-colonial India offers Karnad the subject to develop a dramatic plot. In the backdrop of the post-colonial life, the rigid practices, the problems of adjustments in oppressors land, the relation between India and England are discussed in the play. The issue of incest figures prominantly in the play. ***The Broken Images*** and ***Wedding Album*** are based on the modern life which is governed by information communication technology and globalization. Karnad creates myth by using technology as a humanized tool in life. The TV image in ***Broken Images*** interrogates the psyche of Manjula Nayak. In the same way the institution of marriage is discussed in ***Wedding Album***. When people are detached from the past by several years and are governed by the technology, technology takes the place of the past narratives. It is in this sense Karnad creates myth to reflct on life. The authentic and objective articulation of life in the plays establishes Karnad as a renowned modern Indian playwright. Karnad's secular and humanistic concerns are expressed in his plays, although his plays focus on the modern man's problems. The plays represent Karnad's opposition to the inequalities, violence, fundamentalism, selfish motives, domination, treachery etc. The 'satiric' as well as 'heroic' modes Karnad employs, by way of revising the ancient narratives, or using them as metaphors make the appropriate

comments about the modern life. Karnad with his wide- ranging experience, useful liberal education, continuous scientific enquiries and strong personal values has been successful to orient himself to different mediums, especially to dramas and make appropriate comments, suggestions and statements about the contemporary life. The exposure to drama and theatre during his childhood days and the education that he got in different places, in fact, opened up several possibilities for him to experiment his visions of life with various kinds of theatre paraphernalia and traditional sources. The moral aberrations, the rude attitudes, the inhuman societal practices and other issues are viewd with a human interest in Karnad's plays. So, one can contend that all his thirteen plays manifest the dramatist's humanistic concerns as he is basically a humanist, in spite of his engagement with different medium in various roles. The study of the plays of such multi-faceted cultural icon has been a joyful and an enlightening experience to this researcher. Therefore one concludes with a hope for Karnad's contribution to enrich the Indian literary tradition in the future with many more works like the thirteen plays and the two prose narratives such as 'Musalmana Banda, Musalmana Banda' and 'Adadatha Ayusha' that he published very recently.

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Appendices

1. **Karnad's Works**
2. **Karnad's Life: Important Years**
3. **Awards and Honours won by Karnad**

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Appendix – 1

Karnad's Works

Kannada

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2. ***MaNishada*** (one act play) ***Ekanka Sangraha*** Ed. Sinduvalli Anatha Moorthy (New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 1986)1963 (A Radio play).

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11. ***Bimba*** (Dharwad: Manohara Grantha Mala, 2004) ***Odakalu Bimba*** (revised) 2006 (Originally written in English).

12. ***Maduveya Album*** (Dharwad: Manohara Grantha Mala, 2006).

13. ***Samagra Nataka*** (Dharwad: Manohara Grantha Mala, 2007).

14. ***Agomme Egomme*** (Collection of articles) (Dharwad: Manohara Grantha Mala, 2008).

15, Musalmana Banda, Musalmana Banda (a story) ***Desha Kala Visheshanka*** 2010.

16 Adadatha Ayusha (Autobiography) ***Desha Kala*** July-Sept 2010.

English

1. ***Yayati*** (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008).

2. ***Tughlaq*** (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1972).

3. ***Hayavadana*** (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1975).

4. ***Driven Show*** (Unpublished).

5. ***Bali: The Sacrifice*** (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

6. ***Naga Mandala: A Play with Cobra*** (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990).

7. ***Tale-Danda*** (Delhi: Ravi Dayal publishers, 2007).

8. ***The Fire and The Rain*** (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

9. ***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*** (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004).

10. ***Three Plays: Naga Mandala, Hayavadana, Tughlaq*** (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

11. ***Two Monologues: Flowers, Broken Images*** (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005).

12. ***Two Plays*: *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan, Bali: The Sacrifice*** (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004).

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Articles/Papers/Lectures

'Pouranika Illave Aithihasika Vasthu Vinyasa- Srinivasara *Kakanakote*' **Manvanthara** 1967.

'Natakadalli Samakaaleena Dhrishtikona-Srirangara *Harijanwara*' **Manvanthara** 1967.

'Nataka Mattu Vaicharikathe' **Manvanthara** 1968.

'Hittina Koli' **Rujuvathu** 1981.

'Caste Conflict in Kannada Cinema' First Ritwik Ghatak Memorial Lecture, Kino Journal of the Cine Club of Calcutta 1980.

'Bhavabhuti's *Uttara Rama Charita*: A Play about a Playwright' Conference on Indian Literature for the Festival of India 1986.

'In Search of a New Theatre', Contemporary Indian Drama Ed. Carla Borden Washington Smithsonian Press.

'Culture' Ed. Marshall M Boulton.Boulder and London: Westveiw Press 1987.

'Theatre in India' Daedalus Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences 1989

'Masks of Reality' Little India 1991.

'The Citizen as Soldier' Inaugural Address in Marathi at the Marathi Literary Conference Ahmadnagar.Published in Economic and Political Weekly 1997.

'Entertaining India' Satyajit Roy Memorial Lecture, Nehru Centre London 1993.

'The Arts and Social Change in India' India's Culture in Motion Roy Tropical Institute Amsterdam 1998.

International Theatre Day Message for the International Theatre of UNESCO 2001.

'Colonialism and Culture' Kingsley Martin Memorial Lecture King's College, Cambridge 2002.

'Word Theatre Day – 27 March 2002' Theatre India 2002.

'A Playwright- A Discussion with UR Anantha Murthy, Prasanna, Girish Karnad' Indian Literature 1995.

Movies/ Documentaries/Teleserials

1.Sanskara- film in Kannada 1969.

2.Vamsha Vriksha- film in Kannada 1971.

3.Ondanondu Kaladalli- film in Kannada 1978.

4.Kanoor Haggadathi- film in Kannada 1999.

5.Kaadu- film in Kannada 1973.

6.Chelvi-film in Hindi 1992.

7.Durga - film in Hindi.

8.Utsav-film in Hindi 1984.

9.Wohghar- TV Play based on Kartakoti's Kannada play Aa Mani. 1986.

10. Godhuli – film in Hindi1977.

11. Tabbaliyu Ninade Magane-film in Kannada 1977.

12. D R Bendre –Documentary in Kannada 1973.

13. Kanaka Puranadara- Documentary in English1988.

14. The Lamp in the Nishe -Documentary in English1989.

15. Bhagvadgeethe -Documentary in English for BBC 2002.

16. Antaraal-Teleserial 1997.

17. Swarajnana- Teleserial 1998.

18. Kanoor Ki Thakurii- Teleserial 1999.

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Appendix – 2

Karnad's Life – Important years

Year of Birth : 1938

B.A Degree : 1958

M.A. Degree : 1963

Asst. Manager & Manager, Oxford University Press Madras:1963 – 70

Director of film and Television Institute Pune: 1974 – 75

President of Karnataka Natak Academy: 1976 – 78

Marriage with Dr. Saraswati: 1980

Indian Co – Chairman for the Joint Media Committee of the Indo – US, Sub – Committee on Education and Culture, Visiting Professor – Full Bright Resident Scholar

Chicago University: 1987 – 88

Chairman of Sangeet Nataka Academy, New Delhi: 1988 – 93

Sahitya Akademi Award: 1994

Sangeet Natak Akademy scholarship: 1994

Doctorate Degree from Karnataka University: 1994

Kalidas Samman Award: 1997

Jnanapeetha Award: 1999

Director of Nehru Centre London: 2000

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Appendix -3

Awards and Honours won by Karnad

1.1st Rank in B.A (University level)-1958

2. 'Dakshina Fellow' in the Dept of Statistics for M.A, Bombay University-1958-59.

3. Rhodes Scholarship, Oxford-1960-63.

4. President, Oxford Union Society-1963.

5. Mysore State Award for ***Yayati***-1962.

6. Government of Mysore Rajyotsava Award-1970.

7. President's Gold Medal for the Best Indian Film for *Samskara*-1970.

8. Homi Bhabha Fellowship for Creative work in Folk Theatre-1970-72.

9. Sangeet Nataka Academy Award for Playwriting-1972.

10. Kamaladevi Award of the Bharathiya Natya Sangh for the Best Indian Play of the Year for ***Hayavadana***-1972.

11. National Award for Excellence in Direction for *Vamsha Vriksha* (shared with B.V Karanth)-1972.

12. Mysore State Award for the Best Kannada Film and Best Direction for *Vamsha Vriksha*-1972.

13. President's Silver Medal for the Second Best Indian Film for *Kaadu*-1974.

14. Padmashree Award from the President of India-1974.

15. Director, Film and Television Institute, Pune-1974-75.

16. President, Karnataka Nataka Akademy- 1976-78.

17. National Award for the Best Kannada Film for *Ondanondu Kaladalli*-1978.

18. National Award for the Best Script for *Bhoomika* (shared with Shyam Benegal and Satyadev Dubey)-1978.
19. Filmfare Award for the Best Script for *Godholi* (shared with B.V Karanth) -1978.
20. West Benegal Film Journalists Association Award for the Best Actor of the Year for Swami-1978.
21. Karnataka Nataka Academy Award -1984.
22. Indian Co-Chairman, Joint Media Committee (for Films, Broadcasting and Press) of the Indo-US Sub-Committee on Education and Culture-1984-93.
23. Visiting Professor and Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence, University of Chicago-1987-88.
24. Chairman Sangeet Nataka Academy, New Delhi-1988.
25. Nandikar Calcutta, Award for Playwriting -1989.
26. Golden Lotus for the Best Non-Feature Film on Social Issues for *The Lamp in the Niche* -1990.
27. 'Writer of the Year' Award from Granthaloka Journal of the Book Trade for *Tale-Danda*-1990.
28. Karnataka State Award for the Best Supporting Actor in *Santa Shishunala Shareefa* - 1991.
29. B.H Shridhar Award for ***Tale-Danda***-1992.
30. Karnataka Sahitya Academy Award for the Best Play of 1990-91for ***Tale-Danda***-1992.
31. Padma Bhushana Award from the President of India-1992.
32. Booksellers and Publishers Association of South India Award-1992.
33. Karnataka Sahitya Academy Award for ***Tale-Danda***-1993.
34. National Award for the Best Film for Environment Conservation for *Chelvi*-1993.
35. Doctor of Letters Degree from Karnataka University, Dharwad-1994.

36. Special Honour Award from the Karnataka Sahitya Akademy-1994.

37. Sahitya Akademy Award for ***Tale-Danda***-1994.

38. Elected Fellow, Sangeet Nataka Akademy NewDelhi-1994.

39. Gubbi Veeranna Award by the Government of Karnataka-1997.

40. Kalidas Samman by the Government of Madhya Pradesh-1999.

41. Bharatiya Jnanapith Award-1999.

42. Director, the Nehru Centre, London and Minister, Culture, High Commission of India, London-2000-03.

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AKSHARA GRANTHALAYA
ACC.NO. 049300